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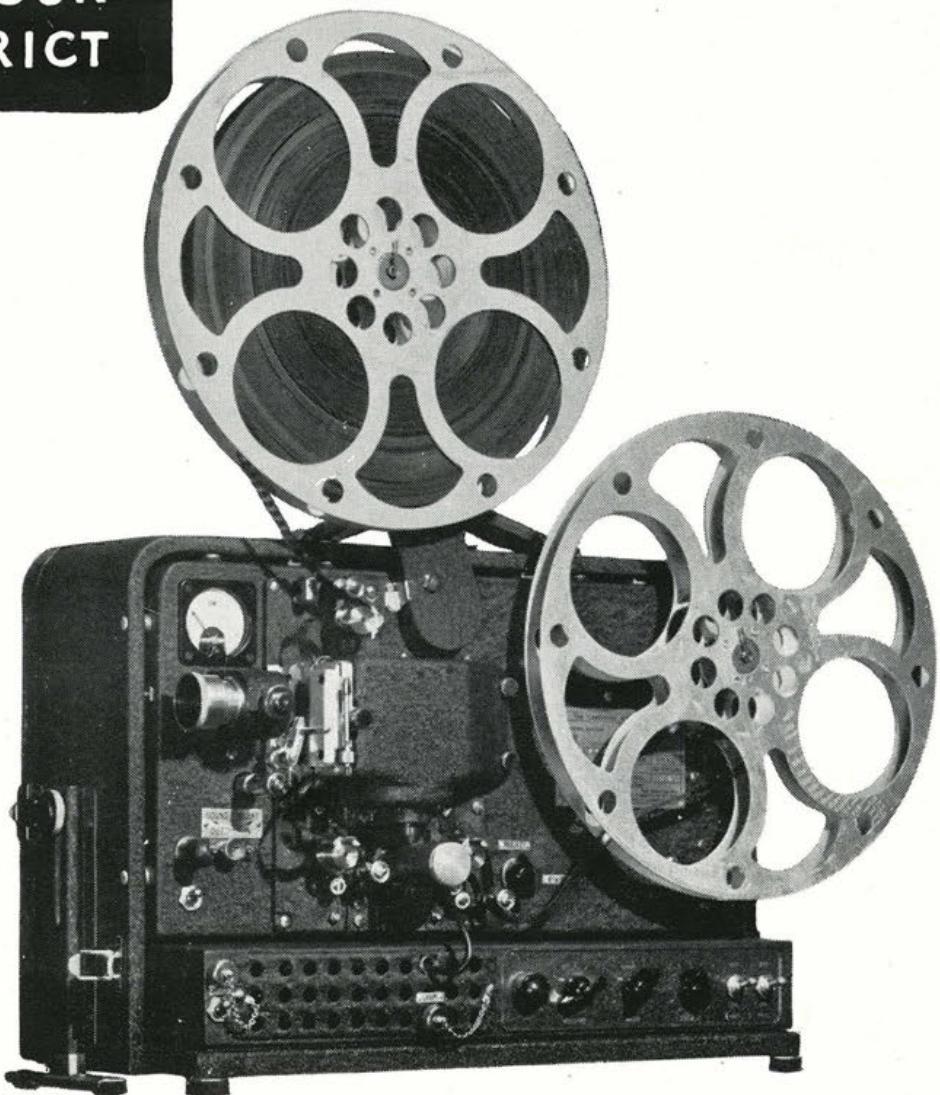
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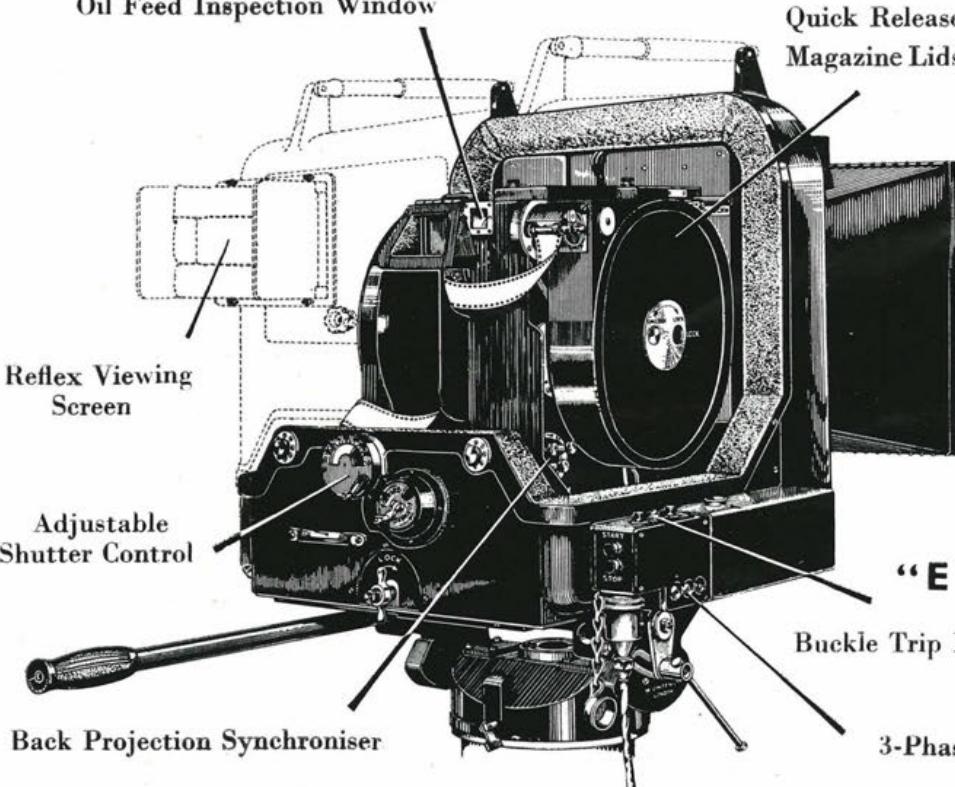
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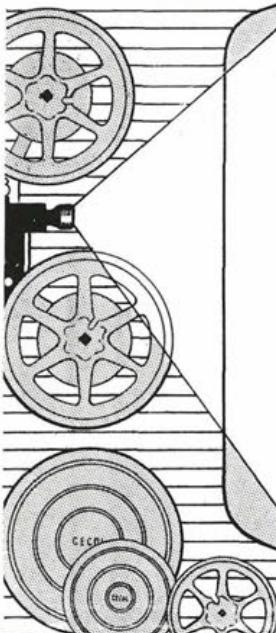
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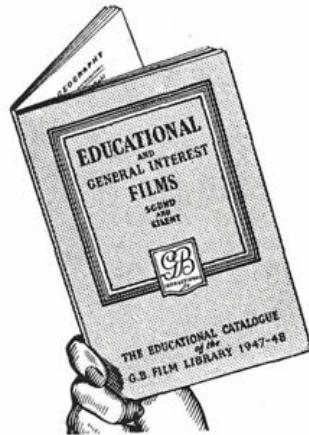
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SIGHT AND SOUND

an International Film Review published by the British Film Institute

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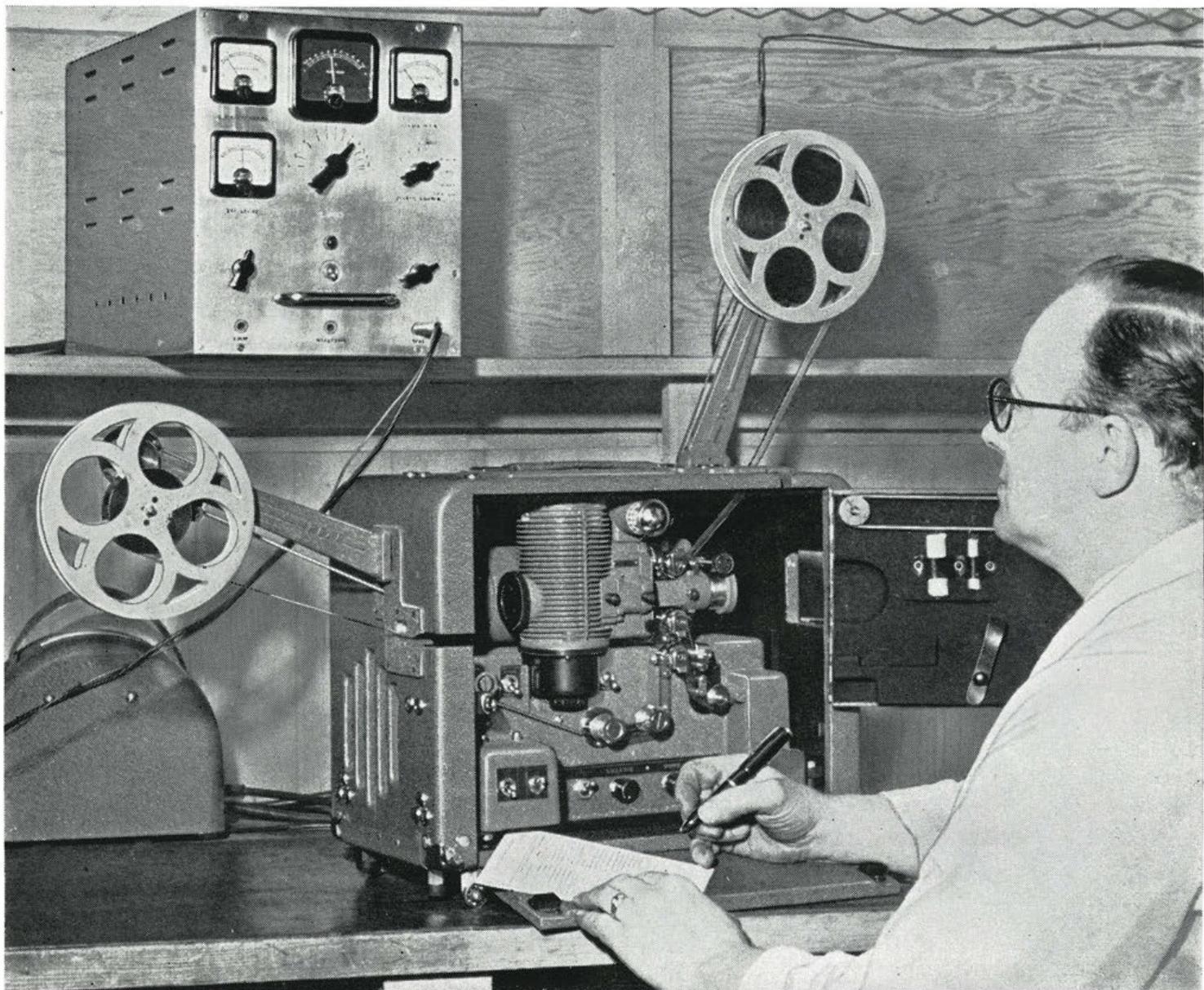
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THE CINEMA IN EASTERN EUROPE

By

BENGT RÖSIÖ

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT once inspired several great Russian film directors to create the cinematic masterpieces which are well-known to everybody who is interested in the subject of film as an art form. Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Dziga-Vertov, Romm and many others achieved wonderful results in films dealing with the new era which had just begun in Russia. As the years passed by, however, the enthusiasm weakened, the revolutionary spirit from *Potemkin* and the other great films died, and to-day the Soviet film's main characteristic is undoubtedly propaganda.

The same evolution is also typical for the countries in Eastern Europe where Communist governments were established after the war, Bulgaria, Roumania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. In all these countries the film industry has been nationalized and since the end of the war films have been produced in a quantity and of a quality as never before. In the beginning of these socialist years the enthusiasm was enormous and young film

directors made several good films, e.g., about the uprising against the Germans—films that were equivalent to the great Russian silents. But recently it has become obvious that the cinema in Eastern Europe is now mainly devoted to propaganda.

BULGARIA

In Bulgaria the film industry was almost non-existent before the war. Even if the first film was made as early as 1903, the economic basis was very weak and production consequently on a small scale. Comedies, crime films, etc., were the chief productions, together with a few films about Bulgaria's struggle for national freedom in different wars, such as *Strahil Vojvoda* (1937). A state-subsidised enterprise, Bulgarske Delo, was established in 1941 which produced newsreels of pro-Nazi tendency for the German occupiers. After the liberation of Bulgaria this enterprise

was taken over by the new government and on the 5th April, 1948, it was entirely nationalized. Under the name Bulgarian State Film it now has the monopoly of film production and distribution in Bulgaria.

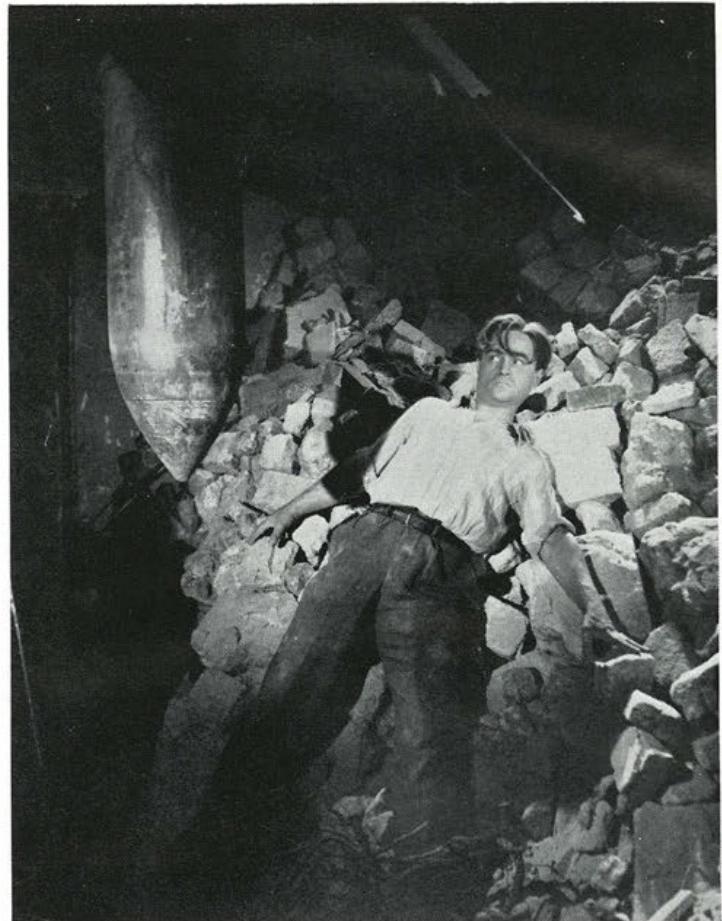
The Bulgarian State Film produces one newsreel every week and also a great number of documentaries and short interest films, generally dealing with the rebuilding of the country: the work in the youths' brigades, the *kolchos* system, the industrialization of the country, etc. One film, *A Day in Sofia*, depicts life in the capital, and there have also been several folklore films, one of which, *Marriage in a Peasants' Village* was shown at the festival in Venice, 1947. A meteorological film, *People in the Clouds*, won fourth prize at the same festival.

Only one feature-length film has been produced since the war, *Karlin Orelat* (Karlin the Eagle), dealing with a national hero in the war against Turkey in 1878. From 1949 onwards five or six films will be produced every year, and the first scripts are now under preparation. Orlin Vassilev and Krastio Belev are the most prominent script-writers, and several future film directors and cameramen are studying at the film high schools in Moscow and Prague. In the meantime, Soviet film production units have been invited to make films in Bulgaria with a mingled Russian-Bulgarian staff. A 2,000 metre long documentary about Bulgaria, directed by Katzmann, is hitherto the main result of this co-operation.

The 280 cinemas in Bulgaria mainly show Russian films, while the import from U.S.A. and Czecho-Slovakia is limited to about 20 films a year from each country. Yugoslav and French films are shown occasionally, and the Italian *Open City* has reached Sofia.

YUGOSLAVIA

In Yugoslavia, too, film production is nationalized but divided into seven different units, all of which are supervised by a State committee—Triglav, Jadran, Avala, Vardar, Bosna, Zvezda and Nastavni Film. Apart from newsreels and documentaries these units have produced several feature films, among them the famous *Slavica* from the national uprising against the German occupants. The subject of *The Life Belongs To Us* (*Zivot je nas*) is the building of the railway between Samac and Sarajevo, 1947,



Skard (The Treasure)

Film Polski

a work in which youths' brigades from most European countries took part.

This People Must Live (*Zivjece ovaj narod*) is another film which has scored considerable success and also been a big box-office hit in Yugoslavia. The film begins with the capitulation of the military forces at the arrival of German troops, and this causes the male population in the little villages to leave their homes and organize themselves as partisans in the forests. Technically the film is excellent, and artistically it shows a strong influence from the Russian school, especially Eisenstein—the procession of women and children across the snowy landscape reminds one of the procession in Kazan in *Ivan the Terrible*, and the battle scenes have obviously been inspired by *Alexander Nevsky*. The propaganda purpose has not been neglected, and Marshal Tito himself appears in an almost grotesque but brilliantly edited sequence from a "kolo" where he delivers a speech to the people which "must live". The film has been directed by Nikola Popovic, the script is written by Branko Copic and the cameraman is Oktavian Miletic.

Film distribution and import in Yugoslavia is organized on the same lines as in Bulgaria. Film production is working in accordance with a five-year-plan. A great number of feature films, documentaries and cartoons will be produced within the next few years and in 1951 they expect to reach their goal—40 feature films and 100 documentaries a year.



The High School of Cinema, Lódz

ALBANIA AND HUNGARY

In the smallest of the countries in the Balkans, Albania, there has never been any film production at all, until the end of 1945. Aided by Yugoslavia, the Albanians began building up a film industry, but when Tito was excommunicated from the Kominform in June last year, this work suddenly came to an end, as all Yugoslav technicians and engineers had to leave Albania. The Albanian authorities turned to Bulgaria instead, and in December, 1948, Dimitri Calamata, Vice President of the Committee for Art and Culture in Albania, visited Sofia and there signed an agreement with the Bulgarian State Film. Starting this year the two countries will exchange newsreel material, etc., and Albanian technicians and future film directors have been invited to educate themselves by working in the Bulgarian film studios. Soviet Russia has furnished Albania with the necessary equipment for building the first film studio in Tirana.

In Hungary the film industry after the war was controlled by the political parties, but has now been taken over by the State—the production is nationalized 100 per cent., the cinemas 85 per cent. and distribution 75 per cent. Production in 1948 included five feature-length films, *Beszterce ostrom* (The Siege of Beszterce), *Tűz!* (Fire!), *Talpalatnyi föld* (A Foot-breadth of Earth), *Diszmagyár* (The gala dress) and *Magnás Miska*. As in Bulgaria a

Russian unit has also produced a feature-length documentary about the country, directed by Lydia Stjepanova. For 1949 twelve feature films are scheduled, together with a great number of short interest films. Most films have social themes, and the treatment is realistic, but musicals and comedies are also produced. The content of *A Foot-breadth of Earth* is rather typical of Hungarian films: a poor peasant in a little village in the 'thirties is oppressed by the rich landlords, and he always meets with difficulties when he tries to earn money for himself and his family. The landlord prevents him from getting water for his fields, and when he and his comrades attack the canals to get the necessary supply of water, he is jailed. In 1945, after the Russian invasion, he is finally liberated and can start a new life in a Socialist society.

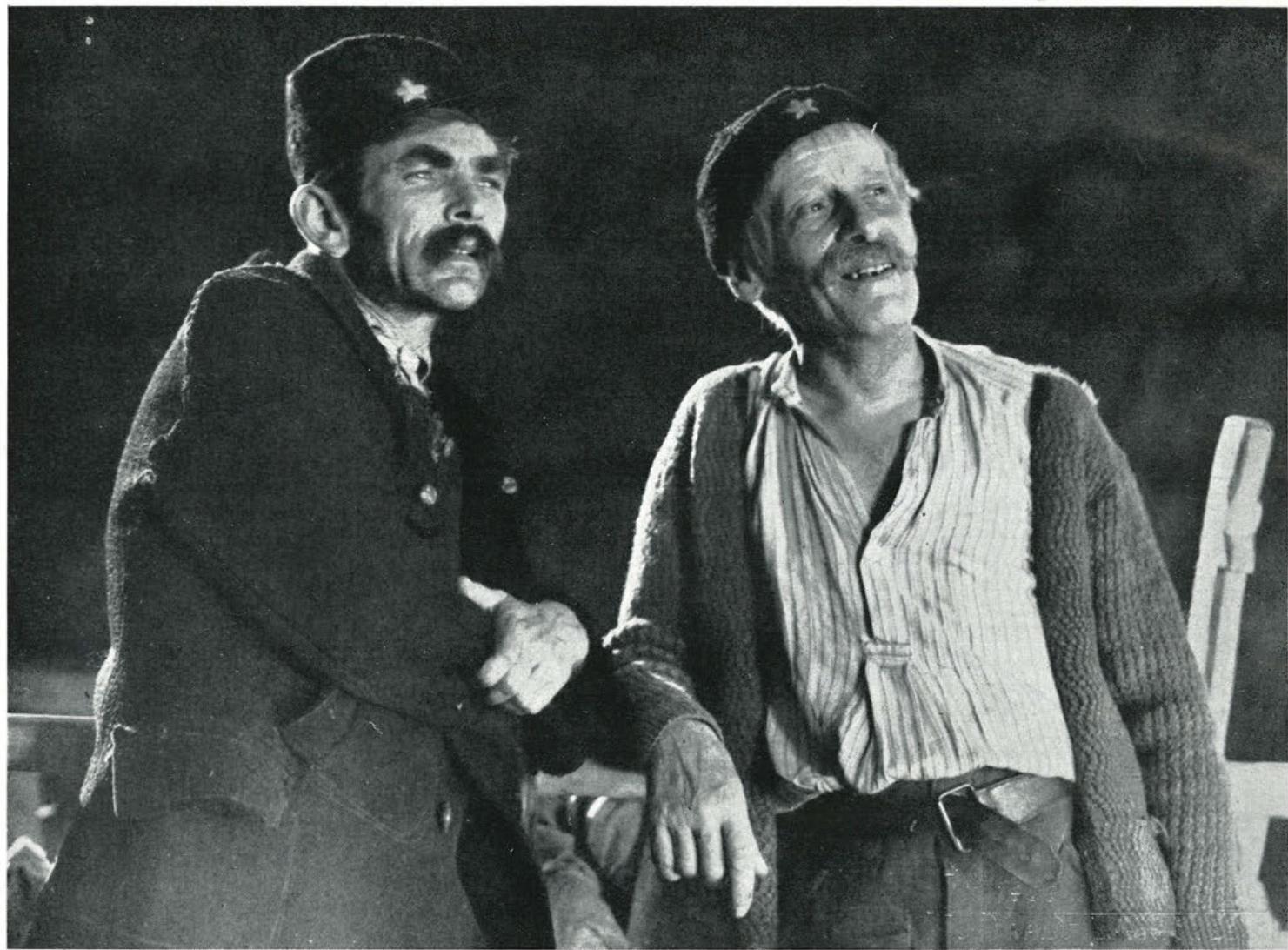
There are 70 cinemas playing in Budapest and 447 in the countryside, but there are also about 350 cinemas for sub-standard shows. The repertory is dominated by Russian films. English and French films are also presented, and the import for 1948 included eight Czech films and three or four German ones (DEFA).

In December, 1948, a Film Institute was established, headed by the well-known author and "cineast", Béla Balász. It will work along the same lines as the Czechoslovak Film Institute in Prague, and the establishing of a film archive and a library are among its more important tasks.



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Yugoslav Government



Zivjeće ovaj narod

Jadran-Film

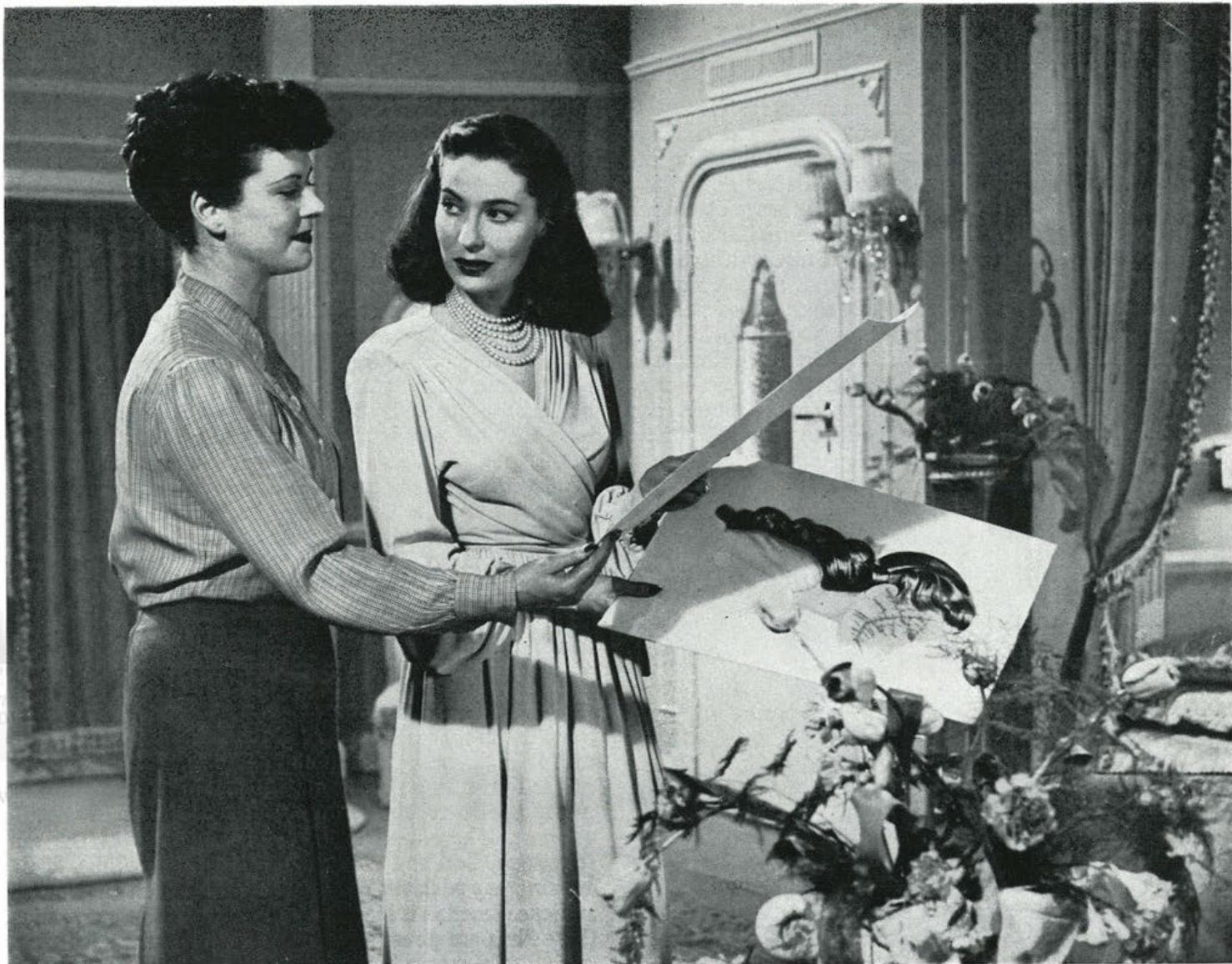
In Roumania the invasion of the Red Army in Bucarest implied an invasion of Russian films, but these were very unfavourably received by the audiences, evidently for political reasons. Nevertheless, Russian films are still dominating the market, which is controlled by the State. Film production is nationalized and confined to documentaries and newsreels but, like Bulgaria, Roumania intends to take up production of feature films. The economic plan for 1949 also includes the building of a film studio. From this year onwards ten mobile cinemas will tour the country to show films to audiences in areas without cinemas.

The Baltic States did little before the war, and their film industry is still very small. Lenfilm has, however, given Estonians an opportunity to make films in Leningrad studios, and the first result is the film *The Life in the Citadel*, made by an Estonian staff and with Estonian actors. It has been released in all countries in Eastern Europe where it has met with great success.

In Poland film production after the war was in an extremely bad state. Film studios and laboratories had been destroyed, together with the cinemas in most of the large towns. The most skilled directors and actors had been killed in the war or gone abroad. As in other countries in Eastern Europe, film production was nationalized, and the rebuilding of it was included in the first Polish three-year-plan. Russian, French and Czech technicians were employed

to assist in the making of the first post-war films, and there still is an extensive co-operation in this field with other states—the recent production *Frontier Street* (*Ulica Graniczna*) has been made with a Polish-Czech staff. A new generation of Polish film creators are studying in the film high school in Lodz.

Production, which is in the hands of "Film Polski", includes newsreels and shorts as well as features. The most famous post-war film is *Oswiecim* (the Polish name for Auschwitz) which takes place in this concentration camp during the last few months of the war. This film, which has been shown all over Eastern Europe, is written and directed by Wanda Jakubowska, who started planning it in 1943, when she was herself imprisoned in Auschwitz. The film is made in a realistic style, and it takes place in a part of the concentration camp which Wanda Jakubowska knows very well: the woman camp in Birkenau. The action mainly consists of the prisoners' personal dramas which are linked together against the background of thousands of anonymous prisoners in this horrifying camp, where the smoke from the crematory chimneys day and night is a symbol of Nazi cruelties. The main part is played by the Polish actress Drapinska, but the actors belong to many nationalities, thus stressing international unity in the struggle for a new and better world.



Valerie Hobson in *Starway to Glamour* (*Drene*)

G.B. Screen Services

ADVERTISING BY FILMS

By

K. LOCKHART SMITH

THE OBJECTS OF ADVERTISING are either to increase the demand for goods or services, or to engender or foster goodwill. There are many ways of achieving these objects, but all depend on an appeal either to the visual or the aural senses and in some methods a combination of both. It is not surprising, therefore, that many advertisers have made use of the film medium. Especially as it is the only readily available medium which appeals to the eye and the ear simultaneously. It is true that television has the same powerful simultaneous appeal but it is not available in this country for advertisers and even in those countries where it is so available it is unlikely to replace film as an advertising medium for some years. Television can capture the moment but it cannot retain it without calling in aid a method of visual recording and the only practical method is the cinematograph film.

At one time, advertising was almost synonymous with vulgarity, but the world has grown up and for many years

now, advertising has contributed greatly to the spread of interest in art and letters. Yes, even the latter, for the modern copywriter is very often a man of taste and erudition. There may still be cases of vulgarity, where vulgarity pays. For although the advertising world is proud to lead the people to the higher planes, it still has to eat and not everyone has æsthetic taste.

Not unnaturally, advertising films differ in their method of approach and presentation just as widely as advertisements in other media. All film making calls for the collaboration of the artist and the craftsman. But an advertising film calls for something in addition. If one analyses the reason for using films for advertising purposes, one quickly realises that it is because the film often forms an ideal channel of communication. A lot of people can understand the visual representation, fewer people understand the spoken word and fewer still can read with understanding. When a film producer sets out to make an

advertising film, he has to channel his available assets in such a way that he presents his message in the form in which it will most appeal to the people with whom he, on behalf of his sponsor, is trying to communicate. Therefore, in addition to a wide knowledge of the arts and crafts of film making, must be added the ability to reflect the sponsor's policy in film form, which calls for disciplined thought. It has often been said that three things determine the shape of every film: the object of the film; the audience it is desired to reach; and the amount of money which is to be expended on the film. In certain types of film making, these fundamentals are often neglected, and of the last named, adequate comment could only be provided by recalling the words of the yell emitted by the enthusiastic huntsman when the fox breaks cover. For the maker of advertising films of all kinds, everything planned and executed must be bounded by the outline formed by these fundamentals and there is no escape from any of them if the film is to be successful.



A day in the life of Wilfred Pickles
Publicity Films for Beecham's Powders

Remembering that an advertising film is essentially a means of communication, it is apparent that the form and method of presentation differs with the type of audience at which the film is to be aimed. It is important to realise that there are many different types of audiences. To take a broad division, there are the audiences which are to be found in the public cinemas and those which form audiences for films in many other different places. In the jargon of the trade, these two broad categories are usually referred to as theatrical and non-theatrical audiences. No one who is interested in films can ignore the advertising film because as a group they not only include examples of interesting film technique but also because they are the modern method of persuasion. They must be treated as they are made, objectively. It is therefore only fair to discuss them in categories within the general divisions referred to above.

FILMS FOR THEATRICAL AUDIENCES

The advertising films which are made for showing in cinemas must be divided into two different types:—Films for paid distribution and films for commercial distribution. The first type is the more generally known and is, erroneously, considered by most people as the type of film referred to when advertising films are mentioned. They are but one of many forms but as they seem to be the form best

known to many people, they can be considered first.

The short advertising film which is shown to the general public in cinemas achieves distribution because the advertiser pays for screen time. This varies in actual cost, for example, a circuit booking usually costs more per theatre than an independent booking, largely because most "first run" houses are in the circuits. Actual costs of distribution need not be referred to here but one can say that it is possible to get national distribution of these advertising films or if preferred, they can be distributed regionally. In return for payment for screen time, the cinema-owner guarantees that only one National advertising film will be shown in any one week and that the film will be shown once during each performance of his film programme. The cinema-owner also guarantees that the advertising film will form part of the actual film programme. This may not appear to mean very much, but as a contrast to this guarantee, many continental countries show a series of advertising films during the interval with the house lights either full up or at least half up, and people moving in and out of the theatre. In this country, the film is given its full chance by being shown as a rule, immediately before the first feature.

Arising out of this fact, it follows that the advertising films must conform to certain conventions. The public goes to the cinema primarily for entertainment and therefore any film shown to them whether it be a mammoth feature or a short advertising film, must be entertaining if it is to succeed. So that the first rule for the advertising film in cinemas is that it must be an entertainment film. Next, it must be realised that these short advertising films are shown in juxtaposition to the feature and other films in the programme. Therefore, they must be made with the same technique, skill and efficiency as the feature films. If they are not, they stick out like a sore thumb and an unfavourable audience reaction is inevitable. In spite of these conventions, these films are direct advertising films and the advertiser is paying to put over his message.

There is a further limitation which has been imposed by most of the cinema owners and certainly by the circuits. This is that the film shall not exceed approximately two minutes in length. Before the war, the acceptable length was five minutes. Many people welcome the two-minute limitation because, whereas the five-minute film did not give the producer time to develop a story, it was too long from the advertiser's point of view to bang over an intriguing and memorable situation. The virtue of the two-minute film is that it can ignore the story and concentrate on the situation which contains or concludes with the advertiser's message.

It can, therefore, be realised that in order to make an entertainment film of first feature quality of two minutes in length, which is designed to advertise a product or service, it requires not only considerable knowledge of film technique, but also very disciplined imagination. These little films are most interesting and the diversity of their method of approach is quite astonishing. From time to time, various "hares" have been raised that the public resents seeing them in theatres. That it has never been considered a serious allegation by the film trade must be fairly obvious because it is unlikely that any cinema proprietor would risk causing resentment among his patrons for the amount of money he gets for showing these films on his screen.

Although these short films are classed as direct advertising, as indeed they are, they are by agreement with the circuits,



Jean Kent in *Spotlight on Glamour* (*Drene*)

limited as to the amount of advertising they can include. There is a Joint Committee representing advertisers, producers and distributors of these films which has laid down a code of rules to govern their making and exhibition. The object of this code is to ensure that worthwhile films are made and worthwhile products advertised. The standard of production is high and in many cases the entertainment value is very great.

There are all sorts of forms of these films—there are the well-known ones which advertise glamorous products such as Drene Shampoo, in which film stars are used to put over the product. In line with this kind of film there are the films which associate well-known comedians with the product—Askey with S.R. Toothpaste; Pickles with Beechams Powders. This type of two-minute advertising film uses the well-known advertising technique of associating a product with a star's name. An example of a similar technique in press advertising is, of course, Lux Toilet Soap. This technique in a film is very effective and especially so when it brings to the screen well-known radio personalities who are not normally seen on the cinema screens.

As can be imagined, the two-minute advertising film is often in cartoon or puppet form. Often the use of the fantastical overcomes the limitation of length. Generally speaking, the coloured cartoons in this class of film follow the Walt Disney technique and the best of them are

G.B. Screen Services

certainly up to his very high standard. An example is the very amusing Soupy series, where a little cartoon character who gets into all sorts of trouble, always consoles himself at the end with a well-known brand of soup. Another series in the direct line from Disney, because the producer worked with him, is publicising with gaiety in many cinemas a well-known brand of petrol. There is, however, another type of cartoon film which breaks away entirely from the Disney tradition—which is the three-dimensional drawing—and is frankly modernistic in presentation, relying on a two-dimensional drawing with outlines unrelated to reality. This style has been effectively developed for advertising various goods. In fact, in spite of the lingering predilection for the foreign in art, the cartoon films being made in this country are just as good as the products from other countries, and advertisers who sponsor them are encouraging a British art which one fine day, when short film makers get a fair return from the box offices, will achieve world-wide recognition.

These little films, as has been indicated, combine the art and craft of the advertiser with that of the film maker, and the variety of their approach, remembering that at all times they are appealing to people who are primarily interested in entertainment, makes them of great interest to those interested in films and advertising.

(To be concluded)

UNFINISHED PROJECT

By

MARY FIELD

The pictures on the opposite and following page were taken at an experiment in audience reaction by Children's Entertainment Films at the Odeon, Swiss Cottage, recently

1949 MAY WELL BECOME FAMOUS as the year in which it was discovered that FILMS make an impact on the CHILD. Hardly an education committee meets nowadays at Little Marlow-in-the-Marsh or Great Plumley-in-the-Pound without passing a solemn resolution about the effect of the Cinema on the Child. Articles abound, lectures are given and conferences called, all dealing with this same impact. Throughout Britain, students of varying standards of efficiency are carrying out serious pieces of research, and even more seriously announcing their findings on children and films.

The interesting thing is that none of these pronouncements can be correlated with the others since all are based on varying factors—the observations of different people watching different groups of children who are seeing different films. There is no constant in the whole business. Indeed, your guess is as good as mine, since each is guessing on a different premise. And the word "guess" is not really an exaggeration when it comes to estimating the reaction of children to films, or indeed of adults to films.

WASTED ENERGY

Very detailed questionnaires on film taste and preferences have been prepared and answers analysed; research groups have gone into the whole problem, following the most modern lines of enquiry. But we need only remember that every form of public observation in the U.S.A., in 1948, foretold the complete defeat of President Truman, and then recall that he is at present ensconced in the White House, to realise that the analysts and predictors of public opinion are not always right. And nothing is more difficult to assess than one's own film taste. To be entirely subjective, if I were asked to-day what film I had enjoyed most in the last six months, I might reply *The Fallen Idol*, or *Mr. Polly*, or *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*. In which case I might be adding weight to any one of the conclusions that film executives like films from English novels, middle-aged women enjoy psychological films about children, or housewives of the professional class prefer films of the great outdoors, none of which is likely to be a correct deduction. In answering questions about films, we are all either too eager to be helpful, too anxious to be original or too naturally secretive to be truthful.

DOUBTFUL REACTIONS

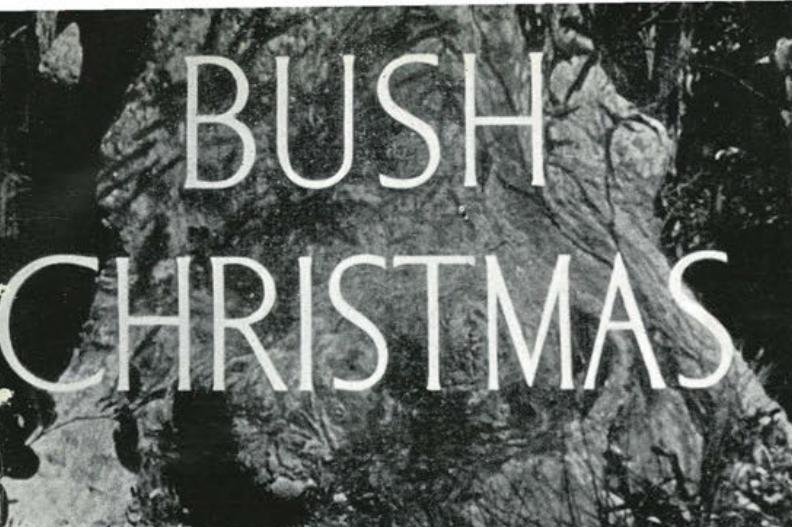
But there is something about us all—adults and children—that does tell the truth about our reactions to films and that is our spontaneous behaviour, expressed by action and sound as we watch the screen, secure, as we believe, in the semi-darkness of the theatre, unselfconscious in the crowd. Of course, at a children's show, children are quite uninhibited and, consequently, very easy to observe. If these reactions can be recorded and synchronised with the actual frame in the film that has evoked them, then something concrete has been provided as material for research. All enquirers will observe us at the same time. Our reactions can be accurately compared with those of other people at the same point of the same film, and these reactions will be true. We shall not be able to hide the pitch of our laughter, the anxious twisting of our hands.

It is, of course, very questionable whether the reactions of a few individuals in an audience are really of value. Perhaps seeing films in a cinema is a public group-activity, different in every way from seeing films semi-privately in a small classroom or with a "home-movie". It is possible that taking individuals at random from an audience, studying their case histories and deducing audience reaction from the small group is altogether misleading as to the behaviour of all the individuals when they are functioning as part of the whole community of the cinema audience. We may need to study the parts in relation to the whole if we are to get anywhere near the truth.

SOUND AND VISION

Now, no enquiry on a great scale has been done along these lines, but the group known as Children's Entertainment Films has begun to follow this method of studying the reactions of its audiences. The sound made by members of cinema clubs who were watching a Walt Disney, a Club Magazine, a children's travel film and the story film, *Bush Christmas*, have been recorded on discs. The microphone was so placed that, although preference was given to the sounds of the children, when the disc is played back it is possible to hear accurately what is coming through the loud-speaker on the stage. So the sounds made by the

BUSH CHRISTMAS



children can be exactly synchronised with the film. Obviously it is possible to re-record the discs on to film and "marry" them with the pictures, giving the film a mixed sound track made up of its own original track and of the audience reactions. By this means, in every part of the world, research workers will, as it were, be present at the same performance. Nor need we limit the research to one performance. We can record the reactions of children from various countries watching the same film, and so have material for international comparison. At the moment I can say that I, personally, have heard the same sound practically at the same "frame" at children's performances in Edgware Road, London, and in Zaandam in Holland, but I have no evidence to support that statement. By recording the sounds made by audiences the evidence will be available to us all.

TRUE EVIDENCE

But, besides the sounds made by children, there are their actions and expressions which indicate their reactions to what is happening on the screen. A good many magazines and some films have published pictures of children looking at moving pictures, but the weakness of these records is that they do not also show what provoked these reactions. It seems possible that horrific and thrilling pictures were projected deliberately in order to provoke strong emotions which are published with the inference that they portray the normal effect of films on children. The staff of Children's Entertainment Films, having observed child audiences in all parts of Great Britain and some parts of Europe decided to take pictures of children at certain points in a selected film. They chose *Bush Christmas*, which was being shown at the Swiss Cottage Odeon, London, for the second time in two years. Still pictures of the film were prepared (Plates Nos. 1-4, 9-12). As the pictures appeared on the screen the photographer snapped the same group of children (Plates Nos. 5-8, 13-16). So we can put the picture and the reaction it caused side by side for consideration and deduction. Other audiences can be photographed at the same points and the results compared.

THE EXAMPLES

In the case of the pictures, Children's Entertainment Films have studied them simply as film-makers, anxious to know more about their audiences. Child psychologists will no doubt observe more. From conversation among the children it was clear that the boy nearest the camera had not seen the film before, while the boy next to him had; indeed in plate 5 he is turning round to say so as the main titles appear. Notice the attitude of the first boy. He challenges the film to entertain him if it can. Fig. 2 depicts a dramatic moment in the story. The camera pans down to show that the horse thieves have followed the children home. But this is no surprise. The audience was prepared for this to happen. Notice the relaxation of their attitudes, due probably to satisfied anticipation. Fig. 3 shows the children confessing to their angry father. All members of our audience group are taking this very seriously. The parents in children's special films are often judged by our youngsters to be too severe. Fig. 4 was selected for its

beauty, as the horsemen came through the river, splashing the water high. The second boy is pointing out the characters to his neighbour, to whom the story is new, helping him to follow it. This scene and those following, with no dialogue, gave a welcome opportunity for an exchange of comments. Fig. 9 is another very dramatic moment where the film children find the footprints of the stolen horses. The audience is silently absorbed. So, too, is the whole group at the sad moment (Fig. 10) when the rain pours down and washes out the tracks on the mountain. Fig. 11 is another lovely long-shot. Again the long-shot provokes pointing in order probably to pick out the important parts of the picture. We have adjusted the construction of our long shots to make them easier to apprehend. Notice this time the boy who is new to the film is doing the pointing. He became completely identified with the picture at one point, urging the children on the screen to "Wake up, wake up!" His neighbour assured him "They won't wake yet". Fig. 12 is perhaps a "near horror"—Neza, the Abo boy, eats live grubs. Notice the difference between the sexes here. The boys seem to find the idea repugnant, but most of the girls are amused. But not the little girl in the front row. In each picture she has hardly stirred or moved her position. Such concentration must be exhausting. *Bush Christmas* lasts seventy minutes and it is too severe an ordeal for such a child. We are right in now limiting the length of our story films to forty or fifty minutes.

Here our pictures end—only halfway through the film. We had intended to use infra-red plates, but such plates are like souffles. There is one moment when they are perfection, and at the next they are almost valueless. So it came about we had to use flashlights for these pictures. Now the audience resented these flashes that broke in their absorption in the story-telling. By the time the eighth light had flashed a small boy not more than nine walked solemnly down the long aisle and addressed the picture-takers. He was confident that a reasonable request made to reasonable people would be effective. He felt he represented the fourteen hundred children present. With directness and politeness he spoke. "Stop it", he said, and returned to his seat.

So we stopped. Hence the unfinished project. But it will be resumed.

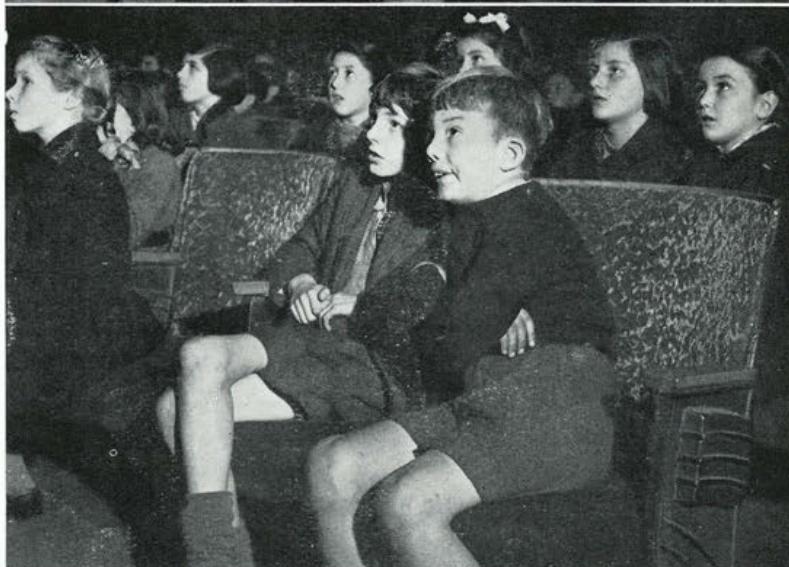
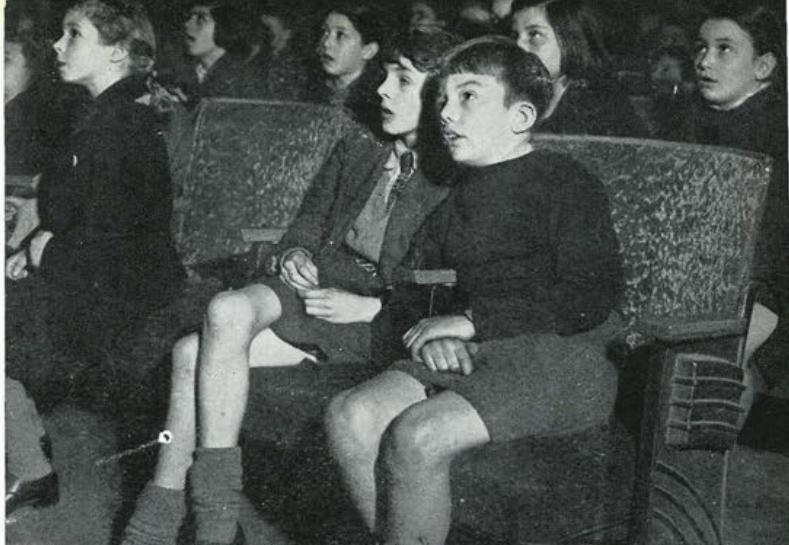
Note: Figs. 1-4 are on the left hand column of the preceding page, figs. 5-8 on the right. Figs. 9-12 on the left of the page opposite, 13-16 on the right.

Poul Schierbeck

Poul Schierbeck, the eminent Danish composer, died on February 9th at the age of sixty after a long illness.

Schierbeck's score to Carl Th. Dreyer's *Day of Wrath* sets a standard in film music: unobtrusive, exceptionally economical, and on the very highest level of musical taste and craftsmanship, it plays a vital part in enhancing the sombre mood of the film.

G. C.





Under Shanghai Roofs

Peck Film

CHINESE INTERVIEW

By

OSWELL BLAKESTON

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of China Film Studios, a company controlling three of China's major eight film studios, has been visiting England in order to study our production. So I asked Mr. Tsin-Yu Lo, before his departure, for his final impression. "Western films", he said, "are first and foremost 'entertainment'; but in China, in spite of all difficulties, we try to make films which comment on the problems of life. You can guess there is no lack of problems for us just now. We had, in the past, an agricultural society which ensured happiness to the small group—the family. To-day, industrialisation is forcing us to organise life in larger groups; and our prime concern is to attempt to restore the happiness which seems to vanish when one

thinks in abstract terms outside the family circle. We, who are making films in China, think it our duty to help in the discovery of a solution. This is not necessarily what you in the West would call entertainment. Perhaps our audiences must pay to go to the cinemas to weep.

"Naturally, in modern China there are countless obstacles to film production of any kind. We have to rely chiefly on the home market, and that means four hundred theatres. You see, since the Japanese invasion, we have not had much spare time for building new cinemas. It's true that sometimes we are able to exploit the overseas Chinese market, especially in Malaya; and then we may be able to exchange copies of a film for raw stock to make a new one.

(The supply of raw stock, as you can imagine, is one of our great difficulties.) On the whole, though, we have to rely on the home market—and last year we produced 80 films in China. You must not forget we have often been forced by the circumstances of war to carry on with our film work in caves. It is possible that nothing can stop us, for we take the art of the film very seriously".

I asked Mr. Lo if he could outline for me the major difference between contemporary Western and Chinese films, apart from the question of vital content. He said: "Externally, the major difference is in tempo. Our feature films run to the same length as yours, but our individual shots are longer; and this is principally because the lines of our dialogue run to greater length. We have found we can create more tension in the drama by giving characters the somewhat long set speeches which the audience expects them to make as people, than by a mechanical speeding up of the cutting. Perhaps we prefer the pause before action,

the ceremony of intention and threat, more than action itself.

"Otherwise, there is not such a big difference between Eastern and Western films as between our respective theatres. The Chinese theatre, which does not rely on scenery, can take exceptional liberties with space and time. In fact it would be very possible to try out a treatment for a film on the Chinese stage—something which would be quite impractical in the Western theatre".

Finally, I asked Mr. Lo about his immediate plans. "I hope", he said, "to make a film called *Rice*. Yes, it will be influenced by my visit to the West. I might have developed my story simply as a drama of the struggle for food; but now I will also show the necessary parallel struggle for kindness. Somehow I have learnt that rice alone will not save a people unless they are also blessed with kindness from their neighbours".



On the Sungri River

A Chungchun Production

SET PIECE

A discussion on the possibilities of greater varieties in our present film diet

LOOKING THROUGH THE jumbled curiosity shop of past films is a fascinating pleasure; for we see not only the masterpieces and the storm centres but the obscure experiments long forgotten. Always in the past there was some new road being driven through obstructions, some fresh aspect or trick being unearthed. But the film was a weapon of war, and in 1939 had to quickly adapt itself to a more stern and vital purpose. It became more a science and less an art, and to a considerable extent its development as a medium of artistic experiment was arrested. The war films have had many beneficial results, especially in this country, but they have also had the effect of narrowing down the surging, revolting river of pre-war cinema to a straight narrow canal of reality. They hypnotised film makers into a conviction that reality was something beyond criticism, and that the highest aim was to create a film so lifelike that its production would finally lose for the cinema all the advantages over other mediums which it had once possessed. This conviction still persists and is threatening to envelop the entire film industry under its dark and ponderous wings; for current films, although still varied in theme, display an undeniable and increasing uniformity of approach. Nor does this appear to be a transitory phase. New developments only add to the power and scope of the already universal reality. Crime stories are being shot before correct documentary backgrounds. Alfred Hitchcock is locking himself up in confined sets and shooting for ten minutes on end. "Independent Frame" with its inherent austerity appears to be a speedy but ultra-synthetic method of simulating reality, and is, at present, unsympathetic to anything save pseudo-realism. Deep focus photography, the answer to the materialist's prayer, has made an impressive entry. "These people" says Hein Heckroth "are now all so proud that they can make a camera focus the whole of some great banqueting hall from the people at the near end of the table to the tapestry at the other end. But why? What is the good of it? You cannot do that with your own eyes, so it is just not natural. It takes your mind off what is happening and gives you nothing better". To this many would reply that it is pleasant to be shown a scene with a clarity impossible for the human eye; and that if you are going to have reality you may just as well have the best reality available. To say that "intense reality" is of the greatest value in documentary and educational films as well as in "real location" stories is not, however, giving it a free passport to run rough-shod over all our screen time. Can the backcloth of life, unaided, develop cinema art to the full? Is there not a need for something more than the purely factual and honestly recorded films with which at the present time we are so heavily endowed? I hope in this article to take upon myself a function of the Food Minister by touching briefly on a few alternative possibilities which might perhaps be of some help in adding variety to our present film diet.

When asked which type of film most closely resembles reality the answer is generally "Documentary with the maximum depth held in perfect focus". Is this correct? The human eye can focus on any one spot but can it hold in focus any great depth? And does the film that depicts everything exactly as it "exists" in concrete terms really show us the life we look upon with our tinted and critically discriminating eyes. In answering this it will help if we first consider a similar problem in relation to the ear.

THE TWO CIRCLES

Radio speakers have often referred to hearing and listening as to two different functions. The former implies, in this context, a vague uncritical semi-awareness of the fact that there are sounds emerging from the radio. One knows whether the sounds are those of the human voice or of musical instruments, and probably one is more or less conscious as to whether or not the sounds are pleasant, but there is no understanding or real appreciation. Listening, on the other hand, implies a mind concentrating on the sound alone and realizing to the full the import of all that is heard. There are, of course, many grades between the two extremes, but generally speaking *hearing* is the taking in of aural impressions, and *listening* the full appreciation of the same impressions by the mind. Perhaps "impressions" in the plural is the wrong word; for can the mind "focus" on two sounds at the same time? If we are listening to a piece of music and there is a clock ticking in the room are we at any time *fully* aware of both? Anyone who has tried to listen to two circles of conversation at once will appreciate my point. One circle or the other slips away and fails to register, and we have to give ourselves a hard jolt so that when we are asked, "Don't you agree?" we will at least have a plausible answer.

A MENTAL PROCESS

These observations relate to sound, but they apply also to sight. We can see and look at things in the same vague way in which we half-hear the wireless; or we can watch and observe as we listen—with critical awareness. Also, while our eyes are receiving light from a score of objects we may only be concentrating on one or two. When watching an aircraft high in the sky we see only a glistening speck; the white clouds and the blue pools are there and strictly speaking we can see them, but we are watching the aircraft and nothing else is registering on our minds. A mass of dancers in a ballroom and on the other side of the packed floor a face we know; how little anything else matters, how little we notice all the others. The puzzle drawings one sometimes sees in children's books, in which the outlines of many objects are drawn on top of each other, are an

interesting case in point. From the first the eye can see all the different outlines clearly, yet the mind registers nothing except a confused jumble. A moment later a certain group of lines form in the mind and jump out of the maze to appear in perfect clarity as a shoe. Next, two narrow parallel lines crossing the toe of the shoe catch our attention; our eye follows them and as they fork out we realize that they are the handle of a spade. So the process goes on until we have drawn out from the chaos a series of lucid outlines. Yet all the while the eye had been looking at exactly the same pattern. The mind had discriminated, like a filter, the impressions received from the eyes. This "visual" discrimination is an entirely mental process. While the eye sees everything the mind dwells on what it will. Factors governing the mind's choice can be grouped under three general headings:—1. Material emphasis. 2. Mood selection. 3. Association of underlying ideas.

The first of these is entirely undisciplined in real life, although it should be under the strictest control in the making of a good film. It covers first the accentuating of certain objects either by light—windows sparkling in the sun, the dappled shadows under a leafy tree; or colour—the white sail on a blue sea, the red traffic light following the yellow. Second the focusing of attention on a central point by form, masses, perspective lines etc., of which pictures without number of every age provide example. Thirdly mere material size or proximity; for if we are looking at a high brick wall from a distance of two feet we cannot reasonably expect to see anything but bricks. The fourth and last section of "material emphasis" is movement, whether it is one move in an otherwise calm scene, or the whole direction of a complex movement leading to one point, as in a Rugger match when the three-quarter line is in full cry down field. Here we see the defenders racing to catch the line that is threatening to score, the full-back moving into position and bracing himself for his solo effort, the whole trailing line in perfect formation and the man with the ball turning and sweeping both his arms and the ball towards the inside man. Our eyes are not on the ball (as they would be if we saw a "still" of this position in the paper) but on the stomach of the running man waiting to take the pass. The "material" reasons for the selection of one aspect of a view are therefore: colour and light, masses and perspective, close proximity and movement.

MOOD SELECTION

The second group of factors governing visual discrimination, those under the heading "mood selection", are harder to define, if only because they are more personal. "Two men look out through the same bars: One sees the mud, and one the stars". That quotation from F. Langbridge is the essence of the matter. One man was probably convinced that his sentence was unfair, and felt a physical craving to tear down the bars, so that when they would not yield to his hopeless straining, he cast down his head in the despair known only to those whose longings have died for want of satisfaction. To him all life was a gloomy slough of dark mud, and he could see nothing in the future, nothing beyond the bars save the dreary, desolate marsh. The second man was one of spirit, he had risked and lost and asked mercy of no man. To him the bars were as a crippled

leg, which could hem in his body but never his mind; and as he looked up he recalled walks home from midnight parties, with old friends, under those same stars. He was as free as any man at that moment. The same view, the same eyes, but different moods, therefore different sections of the view registering. While the example dealt with different persons at the same time it might equally well have applied to the same person at different times. Next day the dreamer's hope faded and on looking again through the bars he, too, saw only mud.

DEPRESSION TESTS

Just how great a part "mood selection" plays in our daily lives is hard to estimate. It is probably very considerable and certainly multiplies the intensity of a mood. A badly kept house with peeling plaster and cobwebs can have no effect at all on Friday night when we are in high spirits and looking forward to a lively week-end; but on Monday morning the cobwebs and plaster are sordid, large and they add considerably to our discomfort and temper. The very act of walking with a bowed head when in despair shows us the gutter, the trampled relics of town life, and hard grey stones; while walking with head high in hope we see other cheerful faces, those less cheerful (that serve to accentuate our own happiness) and the sun shining out of a clear sky on the sharp white buildings. One other aspect of mood selection is the converse or purely "cussed" manner in which we sometimes see only cheerful objects when depressed. Because we can't have what we see, or feel as others are obviously feeling, we indulge in an orgy of pity or anger, bringing in all the available evidence to show how unfair things are. Alternatively, if very happy we look at depressing objects to "test" as it were our mood, and by finding that nothing can depress us, further heightens our pleasure.

The last group of factors controlling things we *notice* as distinct from things we see, has under its wing a strange item which I have roughly noted down as "Things that see us", it would, perhaps, be more correct to say, "Objects that make an active break into our thought irrespective of their material significance or our current mood". These intrusions have their roots below daily conscious moods and hold, in common with dreams, numerous unexpected twists and unintelligible turns. An example would be that of a girl at a party where there is colour and laughter and where she is widely admired. She turns to the person who is talking but finds that her eyes have unconsciously shifted to a curiously shaped green vase. This happens two or three times and she gets a faint but undeniable feeling of melancholy. Probably the vase is not blamed as she thinks it is something mentioned in the conversation that has troubled her. Nevertheless the vase is the offender, although in one of many different ways. It could merely remind her of a vase in a dentist's waiting-room, or it could link with the shape of a tree she had seen a few days before and under which there had been a dead horse, or it could connect with a green gnome in a recent dream, the gnome itself having ties with other unpleasant dream experiences or forgotten incidents of childhood. Whatever the causes, and they are many, we have to take into consideration these objects of deeper personal significance when answering the question, "Why, when looking at A, B and C, do we only notice C?"

In the light of this visual discrimination is it not possible that in showing "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth" film makers have been confusing the camera with the human eye? For the two do not look at life in the same way, and even if they did receive identical impressions our minds would adapt and distort, whereas the camera would absorb everything it saw exactly as it existed. But the camera is not fixed to a seat in the stalls, it can rush up on to the stage and pick out a green vase and say "Look—this vase is important. Significant. Make a note of it". For the camera is nothing more or less than a means whereby objects can be seen from any angle in any size. The camera cannot itself discriminate in what it films, it has to show an accurate picture, but it can choose *how* it is to film an object, so that the finished picture, when related to many others, creates a *controlled* impression of real life as seen by the human eye and understood by the human mind. It can show us a picture in which we see stars rather than mud, faces rather than gutters, and by so doing it can reverse the mood process. Instead of the mind choosing objects to suit its mood, the objects will be manipulated to dictate our mood.

Conditioning mood by careful selection of objects however cannot alone bring a film into the level of true human experience. Sets have also to be used to the full. Over and above being merely an actual background for actual people, the set can fulfil three purposes: conveying a sense of place, a sense of time and sense of the drama being unfolded before it. At least one, and frequently all three of these senses should permeate the whole mood and action of the play or film. "Sense of place" is not only a matter of recording accurately all that is there, but of emphasising and creating by artificial means a feeling that is always vaguely in our minds. We are often aware as to whether or not a certain road is a cheerful one, a building one of ancient dignity or living colourful utility. In *Citizen Kane* awesome Welles created a strong sense of place with his fabulous, opulent and inscrutable "Xanadu".

. . . . AND TIME

Closely linked with the sense of place is that of time. I can recall few film scenes in which the time of day was expressed at all, and where it was indicated it was generally shown by the position of the sun, the face of a clock, or empty milk bottles. Yet the hours of the day have drama in themselves and are often an important part of our feelings. The empty excitement of rising at dawn with the clean snow of a new day stretching before us, the weary bloated hour of 2.0 p.m. when lunch is over and the afternoon's work is not yet broken open, the long, flat, unsympathetic time of twilight on a dull summer afternoon, or the smoky firmness of a clear, cold winter dusk of immense and wistful nostalgia. These are perhaps small points, but they are ones that could on many occasions be effectively used to heighten the feelings already created by actor and the discriminating and imaginative use of camera.

The third aspect of the screen set, however, is very far from being a small point, for although the whole idea that the impression of a drama can be felt in visual terms, and

those terms used in set design, is still a strange one that is neither fully accepted nor generally realized, its ultimate effect on the cinema must be both considerable and far reaching.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari has often been described as a "dead-end". It did, indeed, do its best to kill the impressionist movement in the cinema. By stamping on many minds an unpleasant idea of macabre exaggeration and foolishness *Caligari* dealt film impressionism a blow from which it is still staggering. "That early German distorted stuff" is altogether too cursory a dismissal of an instrument of immense potential power in the development of the cinema.

ACTUALITY AND MENTAL IMPRESSION

When watching a film that deals with subjective rather than impersonal ideas we see much of the action as it is being lived by the leading characters, but we also see it through our own eyes. We are able to watch the drama in a broad general pattern that is frequently beyond the outlook of individual characters; and there is a need, at times, to express straight to the audience certain moods and facets which cannot adequately be seen through eyes of the actors. The set has to tell us something on these occasions—as if it were a picture of the character's brain, something that he feels yet does not see, but which nevertheless has to be seen in clear visual terms by the audience if it is to fully understand all the actor's thoughts and emotions. To show a man who is in a wild temper by the mere filming of red faces, red bodies and red shoes would at once appear ludicrous. But cut from a room scene of normal colour to a quick flash of red fountains, and back again to the room while the actor's position on the screen remains the same, and something of his feeling may be conveyed more vividly than anything the actor could ever hope to achieve unaided. It seems strange that the film, which has used movement in so many directions, has done little with the possibilities of movement from actuality to mental impression—whether violently to convey shock, or imperceptibly to convey the lilting, floating motion that heralds a love scene—or sound sleep. The camera which can so efficiently reproduce concrete objects is no less efficient in its treatment of the fantastic shapes and colour patterns of the human mind.

The problem of the impressionist set, however, is one largely of design and extensive experiment, and until an artist of original genius with sufficient financial backing (for great films cannot be made in a garret on 30/- a week) starts to do for impressionist films what Griffith did for the cinema in general, we cannot expect any startling developments. What these developments will be, if they come, is at present the purest guess-work. The movement between real and dream objects may be brought into play, the subtle inner feelings produced by a wild mass of colour and sound (as in Len Lye) may be found to have some strange meaning that by-passes the conscious mind and sinks straight into the semi-conscious, we may see real sets superimposed over impressions which rise and fall with the emotion of the characters, or the screen may be divided into two, or two screens used simultaneously, to show more than one view of the same scene; view A being

the factual front view, and view B the impression of the scene upon the minds of the characters. Such a division would at first cause considerable discomfort, but later the factor of "having to choose one picture or the other" might jog the audience into a more active viewing of films. The position would be rather like that of a man sitting in the middle of a railway compartment and trying to see the view out of both sides at once. Audiences might miss some of the vital points, but their enjoyment of the film would rely entirely on their own skill in choosing reality or impression at the right moments.

FRESHNESS

But these are mere personal fancies, and although they are an example of one of the major difficulties of impressionism (the personal imagination which has its own clear meanings that convey next to nothing to anyone else) they serve no purpose, for in the first instance impressionism must be the concern of the art designer followed by the director. Only when the first abstract ideas have been set down on film has the writer a part to play.

If we cannot yet see even the dim outlines of the men who will create a living impressionist tradition in the cinema we can at least note one or two solitary protests against the existing totalitarian rule of the "don't play about with life" school.

In the field of painted life Walt Disney and his imitators are indulging in the pleasantly fantastic and often achieving visual effects of considerable charm, although in rather the same basic groove as that cut by Méliès in 1897. Of greater interest is the work of Norman McLaren for the Canadian Government. His films show a genuine freshness of approach and in some cases open up exciting new possibilities. His use of pastel sketches, movement in the depth rather than height and breadth of the screen, outline drawings constantly bending their shape into new outlines, and a certain movement of images by fading, merging and bringing up anew—without any major movement within the frame, are all of the greatest interest in themselves, quite apart from their possible use in human drama films. In a sense these short colour films are serving the same purpose as Gordon Craig's miniature theatre in which he experimented with light and setting. From Germany, birth-place of impressionism in the cinema, comes the new Helmuth Kautner film—*Der Apfel ist ab* (*The Apple has been Picked*) which was first shown in Hamburg during November, 1948. This film is, perhaps, more in the tradition of *Un Chien Andalou* than *Caligari*, but nevertheless represents a startling break with the conventional reality—a fact made all the more surprising by the hard reality of Italian and other German post-war films. The film, with its theme of the fall of man and dream-like sets, has caused more controversy than any other modern German film, and is, at the very least, a bold experiment. Alain Resnay's Venice prize film, *Vincent Van Gogh*, although it never steps out of Van Gogh's paintings, gives a striking example of how effective the action of real characters might be when enacted before such a powerful and atmospheric setting—despite the fact that they were not intended for such a purpose. In this country virtually the only team working on impressionist lines is the Powell, Pressburger, Heckroth unit known as "The Archers". If

their attempts have not always been successful or pleasing it must be said in their favour that they are making mistakes in a field no other commercial team appears willing to tackle. Of the sets used by "Archers" in the ballet of the *The Red Shoes*, and in some of their more recent work, Michael Powell says, "The style will not be realized by the public. If it is the sets will be a failure. Once a director is converted he can never go back". It is interesting to note Michael Powell's confidence in his ability to "get over" something other than the conventional reality film—"The public will accept anything if it is done expertly and presented with assurance". More such confidence would not be out of place in an industry that must eventually, if only out of the sheer boredom of its patrons, find new methods of expression.

Nevertheless, however great the influence of the impressionist idea may be in the future, it must never set itself up as an enemy of realism. There must be no grappling ideologies, no split personality. The two can, and must, exist side by side—not only in films of similar subject matter but within the length of a single film. In time a pattern may evolve whereby the respective parts to be played by reality and impression are more clearly visible; for while the study of conditions in a slum region obviously calls for the maximum reality, the filming of *Finnegan's Wake*, if such a thing can be conceived, could only be carried out by the full employment of all the director's weapons and designer's ingenuity. Between these extremes there lies the common ground of both reality and impression. There is no border, and an artificial one must under no circumstances be created, for open war could only leave both sides the poorer. Not only will both have to exist on equal terms, but in complete unison. The one increasing the value and impact of the other. No art can climb to its full height with only a single leg. The black and white of cause and effect and the green-blues of imagination must be smoothly coupled to form a single whole. For when all is said and filmed, is not life a merging pattern of day and night, reality and dream?

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CZECHOSLOVAK FILM FESTIVAL

will be held from July 23rd to August 7th, 1949, at Mariánské Lázně, under the auspices of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Information.

The aim of the Festival is to show appreciation of the best films which contribute to creating of a new and better humanity and a better world.

Three main prizes will be awarded—the Grand Prize, the Peace Prize and the Work Prize—as well as numerous other prizes and awards.

Information in connection with the Film Festival can be obtained at the Cultural Attaché's Office, Czechoslovak Embassy, 8, Grosvenor Place, London, S.W.1.

AMERICAN LETTER

By

HERMAN G. WEINBERG

A FUNCTION OF CRITICISM is to find that which is good in a bad work and to find that which is bad in a good work, like what one's judgment of people should be. This is constructive criticism. *Joan of Arc* with Ingrid Bergman, by our own premise, is a bad film with one or two good things. Jose Ferrer as the Dauphin provides the film's only moments of strength. For the rest it is childishly oversimplified, its battles *papier-mâché*, its heroine far too wordly, its spiritual content that of a chromo art calendar. Maxwell Anderson's play, *Joan of Lorraine*, which discussed the ethical, moral and spiritual values to be learned from the Maid's life, was thrown out altogether, for the melodramatic "high-spots" of Joan's way to the stake, a pastiche in which Anderson collaborated for the screenplay. Such is expediency. I'm told that Wanger studied Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc* for many weeks before shooting his film (he even lifted several of Dreyer's touches, the dropped chain at the stake; the opening moments of the trial; the sympathetic priest who brings her the cross at the stake, etc.), but it just goes to show you how little influence great films *really* have. Certainly, if Bergman watched Falconetti as Joan she was not influenced by it. The producers, in advertising their film, know where its appeal lies, though—in an exceptionally good-looking young girl, with a *chic* boyish wind-blown bob, with parted and decidedly kissable lips, which has become the trade-mark of the film everywhere and which is, no doubt, responsible in no small measure for its great box office success. In the last analysis, whatever goes into the Hollywood grist mill, comes out the same way. It is a meat-grinder that will take beef and suet, pheasant and turnips, attar of roses and limburger, and turn it all into the same kind of hash that has served so many so well, for so long.

QUEER DISH

Macbeth, à la Orson Welles, is a dish that you will either like or dislike, depending on your attitude to Orson Welles. Mine's favourable, as it happens; I find everything he does interesting and, in varying degrees, above average. So, by my own premise (with which I am stuck, at least for the duration of this article), *Macbeth* is a good film with bad things in it . . . among said bad things being a Scotch burr that no more fits the characters than a bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label before Macbeth would have suited him, or before Lady Macbeth would have suited *her* . . . an obvious attempt to duplicate the effectiveness of the battle scenes of *Alexander Nevsky* in the same pictorial manner but which doesn't come off because, after all, Welles, though he goes to good sources, is apparently no source himself . . . a picturesque but incredible castle of the Scottish kings that stems awkwardly out of the stylized sets of the German silent historical films (*Nibelungenlied*, *Treasure*, etc.) . . . and things like that. But the opening witches' scene is fine and eerie, and I liked Lady Macbeth's believable passion, while the fight at the end is first-class

blood and thunder, far more believable than the technicoloured clashing of sticks in *Joan of Arc*. I'm sure no one else would professionally have dared to film *Macbeth* so we should be grateful to have it, if only as a contribution to Shakespeare on the screen. It has not the polish of Olivier's *Hamlet* (and it is, of course, not nearly so great a play) but since when is polish the measure of Shakespeare? Passion is, and there's enough of it in Welles' *Macbeth* to suit all but the most finicky students of the bard's every word.

HORROR OR A SYLVAN GLADE

The Snake Pit, on the other hand, gives us everything in full measure—one of everything you would expect to find in a film set in a mental hospital is there, including the ubiquitous picture of Freud on the wall in the psychiatrist's office. The mechanics of shock-therapy, narco-hypnosis; hydrotherapy; psycho-therapy—the first three for their melodramatic effect on an audience, doubtless, and the latter because you can't very well avoid it. Also, the patients in various stages of derangement from the mild cases in Ward 1 to the violent cases in the "disturbed" ward. For all its scientific jargon, one learns nothing about mental processes from this film. Everything has been put in to shock or move or entertain an audience—and what there is of tracing thought-processes to their roots is so oversimplified that were it possible to cure its central character as patly as she is finally cured (apparently for good, as no mention is ever made of possible retrogression after she leaves the hospital) one would have to say she was treated barbarously by having had to undergo everything (even the homely, jealous nurse wasn't left out) but brain surgery (*there's* one thing they forgot). Withal, a film of superficial veracity (like the diagnoses of most psychiatrists themselves) of a subject that requires a bigger man than Litvak (*vide* Pabst's *Secrets of a Soul*); a good film with bad things (pat things, obvious things, clichés, false sentimentality versus unnatural unfeelingness, as in the husband's lack of real pain at his wife's plight, etc.). The late Paul Rosenfeld got into a half-dozen pages of his vignette, "The Hospital", the preface to his book, "Men Seen", more of the "ordeal by fire" that is a hospital of any kind, and the jubilation of leaving a hospital cured—looking back at it as one leaves it, not as a house of horror, pain and death, but as a sylvan glade where one sojourned a while and was made well again—more of this, which can be the only valid purpose and meaning of such a painful subject, than all of *The Snake Pit* with its frightening *minutiae* like the rubbing of jelly on the patient's temples before the cathodes are applied in shock-therapy or the tearful singing of "Going Home" at the end. But the audience, hanging on to the pipe-smoking (naturally!) psychiatrist knows that everything will come out alright (otherwise why would they have chosen such a theme?) so even of suspense there is nothing.

Joan of Arc (RKO Radio)



That leaves us with: *A Letter To Three Wives*, a contrived little comedy (for all its rambling length) that has some brash, honest moments quite unusual for Hollywood, and a kind of flip, insouciant air that is refreshing, though it starts off on a most *gauche* foot, namely, that a girl just out of the Waacs, whose house is furnished in the *dernier cri* and whose husband, just out of the Army himself, has a full wardrobe, hasn't got a thing to wear except one mail-order dress that was out-moded even at the time of the *first* World War—on such a premise hangs the film's first half-hour. For all its "realism" it is still a fairy-tale to beguile but not to take seriously, triple-happy-ending and all.

So Dear To My Heart, the new Disney, contains 90 per cent "live action" and 10 per cent. cartoon. This is as idiotic as a film by Julien Duvivier, let's say, containing 10 per cent. "live action" and 90 per cent. cartoon. If what passes for "live action" in this Disney film is really alive then the people I've been associating with for so these many years are zombies. The picture is as full of frayed homilies and sentimental clichés as those crocheted mottoes people used to hang on their living room walls. Even the stray bits of animation in it are lack-lustre. This makes flop number two from Disney for his admirers (the first was *Song of the South*) but his future projects are so intriguing that I'm sure we shall all forgive him.

Leaves *The Quiet One* and *The Fan*. The former has

already been commented upon in SIGHT AND SOUND so all I'll say here is that as an example of how so-called amateurs can wring emotion out of an audience with a film costing a fraction of what so-called professionals spend, this is one to see. The latter is our old friend, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, dressed up but no place to go. By which I mean that 20th Century Fox has lavished its glossiest "production values" (you know what that means—many thousands of dollars, if not millions) but has not known what to do with this little bubble by Wilde. Obviously, for now the play is only a flashback in which Lord Darlington and Mrs. Erlynne reminisce, in the London of today, about their youth. Jeanne Crain is properly petulant as Lady Windermere, Georges Sanders a bit lugubrious as Darlington, and Madeleine Carroll breathlessly lovely, too lovely, as Mrs. Erlynne. But what was once a gay comedy has been turned into a sad reminiscence (Lord and Lady Windermere were killed in an air-raid during the blitz) and, somehow, this well-meaning, modern "frame" has taken all the flavour out of it. I reminisce myself and think back to the great Lubitsch's silent *Lady Windermere's Fan* which accomplished a *tour-de-force* in brilliantly filming this witty play without resorting to a single Wildean epigram through sheer virtuosity of direction. "A production", wrote a leading Viennese critic, "in the best Burgtheater style". I wonder in what style *The Fan* is. Neo-20th Century Fox, probably.

CRISIS IN FAIRYLAND

By

RUSSELL FERGUSON

THERE IS A PLEASANT (though probably apocryphal) story about Sam Goldwyn in which he says, "I do not believe in lawsuits. I never take a man to law. But that does not mean that I cannot fight if I want to. I am suing a man for \$400,000 right now".

The trouble with us human beings is that our minds work in this manner. Some centuries ago, it is true, an original thinker suggested that a thing cannot both be and not be, but he had few converts, and no permanent ones.

"Art and Design in British Films" is the title of a book of drawings, compiled and arranged as a directory of British art-directors, by Edward Carrick. A note inside the flap explains the title:

"... The larger part of this book consists of reproductions of the best work of these artists, whose work remains largely unknown outside the studios. This book is interesting because it shows the influence of the graphic arts upon the motion picture. Looking at the drawings and paintings, it can be seen that the work of the artists is often strikingly beautiful and original, a quality often lacking in the finished film. Very little is known about this aspect of art, the relationship between

the creative mind and the mechanics of film-making. This book lays emphasis on the work of the artist as an individual".

One has only to look at the pictures to see that the pictorial work of British art directors is indeed strikingly beautiful and original, and is indeed unknown outside the studios. None knows better than the artist that (except for the cartoons and an odd experiment such as *Henry V*) films are collections of photographs of people and things, that the influence of the graphic arts on the motion picture is as near nil as no matter and that, if the public is to see anything of the artists' pictorial work, it has to be published. It is natural, then (our minds working as they do), that the book should be called "Art and Design in British Films" and should begin by explaining that the Art and Design shown in the book is not in the Films.

It is clear to anyone who looks at them that the drawings bear no graphic relation to the sets and backgrounds and bits of sets and bits of background that appeared in the films. If challenged on the point, the film person would answer, they do and they don't; and like the rest of us, only rather more so, they carry ambivalence of approach into all stages of their work.

The White Queen, murmuring "Important—unimportant" and Hamlet debating "To be, or not to be" were conscious that the alternatives were in conflict. Film people are not. They have ruled that sets and backgrounds are both graphic and photographic, both important and unimportant, both to be and not to be, there and not there, impressive and unobtrusive, expensive and inexpensive.

TWO POLICIES

The main point of the work, as they very well know, is to ensure that the public do not know that the sets are there at all. The illusion of not having been specially built must be maintained. The sets *qua* sets must not be there.

But there is also the "production value" to be thought of. The production value of a film is the cost in money of what appears on the screen. Film people believe with all their hearts that the more money is spent on a film (*e.g.*, the more production value is put into it) the more attractive to the public it will be. The oftener they are proved wrong, the more firmly they believe it. They believe that the public knows the cost of sets, and that people respect and admire expensive production, and hate and despise cheap production. At the same time, film people take every precaution to make sure that the public does not know the difference between the one and the other, and with the help of the public (whose appetite for illusion is insatiable) they have succeeded, and they know they have succeeded.

Firmly holding these two mutually exclusive beliefs, film people are equipped for pursuing together two contrary policies, lavish expense and skilful economy. They could manage this most tidily by alternating between these policies in separate films, indulging themselves in one and disciplining themselves in another, and something like this was intended by the Rank Organisation before the recent crisis. But it is more usual for contrary policies to be pursued simultaneously in one and the same film, and indeed it is more in accordance with the pathology of the film mind, in which opposing fears are irreconcilably coexistent.

FOLLIES

In the latter case, *i.e.*, as standard practice, there will quite often be real jewels and real gold on the bride, genuine antique furniture, and real crystal and jade in the cabinets (cost of hire, $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the value for seven days). As much as £30,000 worth of gold and shell decoration may be hired at this rate for a table. Stock parts of sets (columns and windows and doors) will be despised and fresh ones made. Sets worth in sum the cost of a cottage hospital will be made for a few weeks' use. The ogees on the mouldings will have to be this way and not that way. The art-director's suggestions for *trompe l'oeil* distances will be scouted, and all the usual follies will be committed, by people who assert and insist that all this "production value" will enhance the film, and will presently assert and

insist and prove that none of it can appear on the screen, for at the same time and for the same film clever model work, perspectives, back-projection, and the *trompe l'oeil* distances already refused for the big sets, will be called into play to save money.

COMPROMISE CORNER

The accompanying behaviour consists of furious arguments and scenes largely because an attack of spending in one patient frequently coincides with an attack of saving in another who is supposed to be collaborating with him.

The general motive force is fear. The backer fears he will lose his money. The producer fears that he is going to make a flop. The director fears that he may have to shoot in reverse or up in the air (and asks for a ceiling to be built in case, £500). The art director fears that the Joneses over the way are being allowed to spend more on their invisible sets than he can spend on his. The office fears everything simultaneously. Over and above this, everybody fears that he will be found out. Everybody fears also that if he does not win his arguments he will lose face. Everybody is a man of the world and knows that what he spends is the measure of his success. Everybody fears the consequence of his spending. And finally everybody is adept at playing upon the fears of everybody else.

The compromise arrived at is to spend and save at the same time; then when one feels one has been extravagant one thinks of the saving, and when one fears one has been mean, one thinks of the extravagance.

There was a well-known psychopath, a lady in middle years, who used to eat glutinous meals and finish with a piece of Ryvita Crispbread to keep her slim. Without the capacity for ambivalent thinking, it is doubtful whether we could live as happily, or unhappily, as we do.

Up till now, sets have been costing on the average ten per cent. of the total cost of the film. Film people have arrived at this figure by analysis of previous costs, but the figure is nevertheless irrational because as we have seen the cost of sets has depended upon two contrary beliefs simultaneously held, each of which might in any degree prevail over the other.

We now have a film crisis and a call for cheaper production. There has been a crisis and a call for cheaper production at several points in the production of every film that has ever been made, and as a result the industry has had as much practice in answering such calls as in ignoring them. The industry can work extravagantly or it can work cheaply, like the violinist who could play in tune, he could play out of tune, it was all the same to him.

Nothing in the nature of a rational or balanced approach to its problems is to be expected of an industry which is the very microcosm of our neurotic, fear-haunted society. But one set of fears is now greatly reinforced, and it is possible that economies in production will be made. If they are in line with all the industry does, they will be above life-size, colossally stupendous, and very well spoken of in the advertisements. What they will in fact amount to, as usual we shall have to wait and see.



Photo: Harris and Ewing, Washington

BY THE TIME these lines are read, Mr. Rank, Sir Alexander Korda and Sir Henry French will have arrived in the U.S.A., there to meet Mr. Nicholas Schenck, Mr. Barney Balaban and Mr. Eric Johnston—representing the selling branch of Hollywood.

These six constitute the Anglo-American Films Committee, and this long postponed meeting—taking place two-and-a-half years after it was first mooted—is intended to open the way for smoother Anglo-American film trading.

It is no disparagement to the other five delegates to assert that none of them will bring to the conference table a mind more nimble than Eric Johnston's.

For few more astute men have emerged in the film world. Ambassador from Hollywood, defender of the American way of life, arbitrator and peacemaker between Hollywood's big seven, shrewd, forceful, unperturbed, Eric Johnston has a mission rather than a job, and he travels the world carrying a torch for America in general and the constituent members of the Motion Picture Association of America in particular. He is Hollywood's peripatetic trailer.

At night he tosses restlessly in his bed, unable to sleep for thinking of the millions of people who are not filmgoers.

The peoples of the world need films, in his creed. Above all, they need American films, and if abundant energy, shrewdness, a salesman's perseverance and doggedness, and a burning faith in his own brand of goods counts for anything, then the American film could have no better ambassador than Eric Johnston.

HOLLYWOOD'S PERIPATETIC TRAILER

By

DORÉ SILVERMAN

For this fifty-two-year-old son of a Spokane, Washington, chemist has been selling things all his life, starting with vacuum-cleaners from door-to-door, then selling electrical goods, building material, air transport, and films. For seven years Director of the Chambers of Commerce of the U.S.A., he entered films in 1945 when he took over his present office from its first president, Will Hays. (But he still directs four large American manufacturing companies.)

Mr. Hays was luckier in his twenty-three years' tenure. This coincided with the financial heyday of Hollywood, which will no more return than will last Saturday. For the twenty inter-war years the screens of the world had been hungry and wide open for Hollywood's films. Even the introduction of sound was but a slight and temporary check.

From world receipts (1946-7) of £700 million, forty per cent. came from overseas.

The second World War plugged this cornucopia. Both for economic and ideological reasons the governments of the world checked and sometimes entirely stopped the entry of American films.

This was the setting when Eric Johnston entered the stage. His reputed salary of £50,000—pounds, not dollars—a year, the giant film corporations of New York and Hollywood considered well spent if he could send the selling spiral upwards again.

After all, it was the merest pittance compared with the revenues involved. With cinema attendances in the U.S.A. rebounding from the wartime boom, figures of 97 million tickets sold in 1944 to 87,500,000 in 1947, and overseas net profits slipping from £30 millions in 1946 to £22,500,000 in 1947, in 1948 to £17,500,000 and in 1949—Mr. Johnston fears—to £12,500,000 (Britain has hitherto provided two-thirds of this overseas revenue), American film interests found themselves with their backs to the wall. They badly need a man of the Johnston calibre to fight back for them. What sort of man is he?

* * *

If you want to study Mr. Johnston, I invite you to accompany me to one of the four Press receptions he has held in London since the war.

His reputation has preceded him and from the assembled British and American journalists there is a buzz of anticipation which is silenced as a dapper, well-dressed and pleasant faced man of medium height marches briskly to the platform and smiles a welcome to his audience.

He makes his statement and then, confidently, firmly, awaits the questions.

If you have seen Amr Bey caress the wall of a squash court by a concealed glancing drive which has left his opponent completely wrong-footed; if you have seen Dennis Compton shape up for an off-drive and then, by a last minute swing of the ankle and flick of the wrist, shoot the ball to the leg boundary while the fielders speculate that they might as well be in Honolulu for all the use they are on that cricket field; if you have seen Alec James in his heyday jump for the ball and then, by a swivel of the neck, send the ball where his opponents least expect, then you will be able to appreciate the verbal adroitness of the Johnstonian technique.

He is master of the half-statement, a prince of selectiveness, a paragon distorter of implication, a champion of discreet silences and an engagingly-naive foster-parent of innocently-wrong deductions.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

"Why aren't British films more popular in the U.S.?"

"For many reasons. Star system—it takes years to build a star. Accents—Texas doesn't understand English accents".

"But we have learned to understand Texas accents". Mr. Johnston smiles a smile which says "How marvellous is human adaptability"!

"But, Mr. Johnston, the B.B.C. has had a considerable number of complaints from listeners that they find it difficult to understand the accents in many American films".

At which Mr. Johnston looks *hurt*. The interrupter, feeling less than the dust, cowers into silence. Mr. Johnston, speedily recovering his smile, looks for a more friendly questioner.

Sometimes his verbal skipping is more obvious than skilful. Twice he counters criticisms with, "After all,

Britain bars American whisky, American automobiles". At the chorus of "Keep to films"! he looks quite pained. Man's ingratitude to man!

To one astute question he replies, "Now that was a clever question. You are pretty smart". Someone at the back of the room, not hearing clearly, thinks that the question has been answered and puts his own. Johnston drives to reply with the speed of a prisoner who finds his cell door unlocked. One question I put to him is riposted with "Now suppose you tell me"? "Oh, no"! I answer, "I am putting questions to *you*"!

He thinks every filmgoer should have the right to choose whether he wishes to see British or U.S. films ("In the U.S. too"? is one of the number of calls simultaneously provoked by the statement. Johnston chooses to reply to the one he finds least inconvenient.)

Someone asks him his views on the recently imposed ban in Britain of all films in which Ben Hecht was concerned, to receive the reply, "I can only say I have a very great admiration for the British people" which you may regard as Johnston-ese for "I think your policemen are wonderful".

Or perhaps he has learned from the British something of the gift of understatement. Even his necktie is, for an American, quiet.

Now he fights back. "You are still the greatest trading nation in the world and any new departure of yours is sooner or later copied by others. You British are renowned for fair play. That is all we ask of you. Give us a fair market".

"What market have you given us, Mr. Johnston? What are the British earnings in the U.S.A.?"

Mr. Johnston replies, "In 1945, nil. In 1946, \$1 million net. In 1947, \$4½ million net"—and sits down.

There is a silence.

"And in 1948"? I ask.

The silence seems to deepen.

"\$1 million".

This provokes a gale of whys and hows. Mr. Johnston loses his composure, as he answers defiantly, "You don't expect us to advertise a competitor who is kicking you in the teeth".

For once the smooth Mr. Johnston has allowed himself to lose self-control.

* * *

Mr. Johnston has his blind spots. He cannot see, for instance, that it is not only governmental action that is restricting the flow of American films to the corners of the world. There are increasing skills abroad, rival techniques and a new public hunger born in part of a revulsion against a growing staleness in the Hollywood product. There is an artistic as well as a financial crisis.

"British films have been taking £1,200 per theatre per week more than American" said Mr. John Davis, Mr. Rank's right-hand man, last June. Why? Because commissars with whips drove British filmgoers from cinemas showing American films into those showing British?

With the fervour of a gospeller, Mr. Johnston reiterates his belief that he knows of no barrier to the success of British films in the U.S. "I have always advocated a greater, freer exchange of films among the nations. We want the channels left open for the pictures of the world, no matter where they are made".

He is therefore mystified, almost mortified, by the lack of nation-wide showings of our films in his country. Some gremlin comes between Denham and Elstree and the screens of Boston, Albuquerque, and Sioux City.

* * *

He also has his critics—and his enemies. Naturally.

"Eric Johnston is to be congratulated on having persuaded British Ministers to share his self-esteem" cattily said the *Financial Times* after he had been received and entertained by Mr. Bevin and Sir Stafford Cripps last autumn, adding, in view of his above-quoted references to British sportsmanship, "He seems in need of education. What is America's definition of a sportsman"? The *Daily Express* added, "At times he is getting the reputation as the American who travels the furthest to learn the least".

This has reference to his European tour last September when he achieved successes in negotiating agreements for American films to be shown—after a twelve-year hiatus—in Russia ("Eric Johnston, the man who punches holes in the

Iron Curtain" said one headline; "The Man who made Molotov say 'Yes'" said another) and Czechoslovakia.

But it was not all films on this tour. Far from it. In Moscow he had discussions not only with Mikoyan, the Minister for Foreign Trade, but also with Molotov. He spoke also with Tito, with the Pope, with Foreign Minister Schuman in Paris and with Franco (when he had reversed the ban on "Gentleman's Agreement" in Spain and incidentally had with him "the longest interview ever granted to an American citizen"). "I told Franco", said Mr. Johnston, "that it was perfect nonsense that we didn't have normal diplomatic relations with Spain".

"What did you discuss"? I asked him on his return. "General matters", he replied. If there was any truth in the sedulously spread rumours that Johnston was running himself in for a Cabinet post in a Republican government, if any, that can be considered when the Republicans reach the White House, if ever.

The rumour did not surprise me. I cannot conceive any one industry sufficient to contain the energy, limit the drive and curb the ambition of a man who, despite what looks like a full-time job as film-salesman, still has time and vision to write a politico-social survey on the U.S.-World situation ("We are all in it": November, 1948) and who reputedly worked his way through the University of Washington by acting as longshoreman on the Smith-Cove dock at Seattle.

SURELY IGNORANCE ISN'T BLISS?

A Reply to Eric Goldschmidt

Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

Sir,—Eric Goldschmidt has a fine time in the Winter issue, pulling the legs of aspirants after film knowledge. I suppose there are a number who think "it's done" to talk in a knowing way about fleeting technical points in otherwise mediocre films. But these people are just the odd few. The majority, who find variations to the opinions "I liked it", "I loathed it", are fumbling after some genuine understanding of film and naturally they will often sound foolish in the initial stages of their gropings, for there is so little guidance to be had in film education.

But I am not writing this to be a plea for more and wiser aids to film education for those who wish to make film their career. I want to take Mr. Goldschmidt into the back row of a circuit cinema and seat him beside a couple of moviegoers whose chatter would please him beyond all telling. There they were, two middle-aged, middle-class housewives. From their final comment on the programme (at least, the last I heard): "That's two weeks running I've enjoyed it". (It . . . what?) I can safely assume that they were habitual cinemagoers.

For how many years? Sufficient to obviate these two most choice of their comments on *The Winslow Boy* at the very beginning, "Why they clutter up a film with all this at the beginning I don't know! Why don't they get on with it?" (For "all this" read "credits"), and later, "Coo, I wonder how they get all those people and things outside the Houses of Parliament". Innocent comments in themselves you may say, but belying a huge gulf between this form of entertainment, which they have "enjoyed two weeks running", and their understanding of it and why they enjoy it. Perhaps it is sufficient that enjoyment should be there, even occasionally. But I think it is distinctly primitive to worship weekly in the temple of a god which one does not comprehend. After all, from these two snatches of conversation we know two things:

(i) They have never stopped to think that a film is made by

hundreds of people, a few of whom are credited (or otherwise) at the opening of their work.

(ii) Film is something quite obscure. My housewives are quite ready to accept that the god of Film has spirited some pre-1914 war people and cabs before the Houses of Parliament in order that this story may appear, quite by magic, before them this Saturday afternoon. Or maybe that part of *The Winslow Boy* was shot in 1912 and preserved in the god's sanctuary for the need, which he foresaw, in 1948.

Now Mr. Goldschmidt wanted us to laugh—and I may say we did—but I would like my readers to take a view far from hilarious. Even the moviegoers who are devoted to the stars and no others get to know the elementaries of film making through their fan magazines, who occasionally spare a page to write about a director, a technician and sometimes to reveal the technical tricks of film-making. But my housewives have not even reached this stage of familiarity with their weekly entertainment.

I do not ask them to be amateur experts—there would then be a dearth of housewives. But, frankly, in this modern age is it decent that people should be so ignorant of their pleasures? All of us who enjoy radio may not be electricians of the highest capabilities, but we do know that galloping horses are never ridden through the studios, that comedians do not wander through millions of doors during their half-hour broadcasts, that the characters in features on arctic life are not subjected to the intense cold and hardships in the which state we are asked to accept them. Because we know this our enjoyment is not lessened: we enjoy what is well done better and are less inclined to accept what is badly done.

And so let someone—even at the risk of tickling Mr. Goldschmidt to death—try and preach this false, primitive god of Film off the screen. Let not one, but many, go out and convert the superstitious. Let all become initiated, if only to within the first pale. People must know what they enjoy.

Yours faithfully,

J. ELLIS PARK.



Tierra del Fuego

Emelco Films

HUMANITY IN THE ARGENTINE CINEMA

By

RAYMOND DEL CASTILLO

IN AN OUTBURST of justified temper one well-known French film critic exploded at the recent Venice Film Festival with, "Why does Argentina persist in sending us mediocrities". He had been sitting through a dreary, lifeless melodrama which could not very well die because it had never lived.

It is a strange and unaccountable fact that, with one exception, all the Argentine films entered at post-war European film festivals have been fifth-rate, with little dramatic and no artistic significance—the only exception was *La Dama Duende*, and even that was a deliberately artificial piece of work adapted from a sixteenth century classic Spanish comedy.

The biggest and most expensive Argentine films of 1948 continue merrily in the same tradition—Benito Perojo's elaborate and expensive *La Hosteria del Caballito Blanco*, adapted from the famous musical-comedy, "White Horse Inn", and Luis Saslavsky's *Historia de Una Mala Mujer*, an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's "Lady Windermere's Fan"—this follows previous adaptations of "A Woman of No Importance" and "An Ideal Husband". This director was able to give life and movement to *La Dama Duende*, but he failed to repeat the trick with his latest film.

Argentine films, in the past, have often managed to give life and movement to old legends and to the re-creation of

national history, but there has been a considerable sliding-off of late, due mainly to local censorship.

For instance, late in 1947 the mayor of Buenos Aires issued a film production code of morals, a lengthy document divided into 16 sections which lays it down that sin in films must always be presented in such an unpleasant light that no cinemagoer shall be tempted to stray from the straight and narrow path; that the state, religion, the army, and the law should always be respected, and that films should be used to instil patriotic feelings and to engender a love for the Catholic faith; no "crudely carnal" scenes may be presented, and it is suggested that films of cultural value could be made exalting family virtues.

Perhaps it was because the film ran afoul of some of these edicts that *Open City* was banned, after it had broken records during the twelve weeks it had been allowed to run in Buenos Aires, and why *Shoeshine* had difficulty in getting past the censor.

But whatever the protectors of the public morals had to say about them, the return of Italian films to the screens of Argentina has seen a remarkable upsurge in their popularity—their success has aroused the interest of the Argentine producers.

THE EMIGRANTS' HOTEL

The success of *Open City* and *To Live In Peace* boosted the popularity of Aldo Fabrizi, until he has come near to equalling the popularity of Louis Jouvet. Thus expectations were high when Fabrizi and an Italian comedy company opened a theatrical season in Buenos Aires in April, 1948, but indifferent performances and exorbitant admission prices doomed the season to failure, and it only lasted a month. However, as a result of this venture, Argentine films have obtained the services of Fabrizi and he has recently completed his first Argentine film and it seems as if, at long last, Argentine studios will escape from the verbose costume-dramas which have formed their staple diet for so long.

The Fabrizi film, which he has written and directed, and in which he plays the leading role, is *The Emigrants' Hotel*, the story of an Italian family who emigrate to Argentina, passing through the famous Immigrants' Hotel, which can house 4,000 people at one time and in which the immigrants can stay, the expense of the first five days being borne by the Government. The interiors of the film were shot at the Palatino Studios in Rome, and the exteriors in Argentina. Ave Ninchi, who gave such a fine performance as Fabrizi's wife in *To Live In Peace*, repeats the role here, and has now decided to settle in Argentina.

Another Argentine producer, Celestino Anzuola, has signed a contract with Anna Magnani for an Italian made film; this actress has received many offers from local studios, and one studio is reported to have offered her £20,000 per film if she will come to Argentina, while a number of other stars and directors have already left Italy for Argentina. Amadeo Nazzari, who is one of the leading Italian stars, has started his first film, and so has Emma Grammatica, the leading Italian stage star. An Italian director, publicized as having worked with Rossellini, was signed by one studio at the highest salary ever paid to a director by a local company, but he proved disappointing and was not allowed to finish his first film.

TIRED OF EPICS

All this activity would have little justification and little influence on the trend of Argentine films if it were merely a case of attempting to transplant the rejuvenated Italian industry in Argentina, such efforts have been made without success in the past, but a recently released Argentine film, and the remarkable success it has achieved, proves that the public in Latin America is tired of the grandiose epics from their studios and desire warmth and humanity in their films.

A small, independent company, S.I.F.A., released a film called *Pelota de Trapo* in July, 1948. Opening without publicity, it took the critics and the public by storm and broke the box-office record set up at the same theatre by *To Live In Peace*. The film, it was the cheapest to be made in Argentina in 1948, had a simple story reminiscent of Louis Daquin's *Nous les Gosses*, all about a group of children who play football on a bit of waste ground with a rag ball, and the leader of the group who dreams of becoming a great footballer (football, as in England, is the most popular of sports, played on Sunday afternoons instead of the traditional Saturday afternoon matches in this country). The director, Leopoldo Torres Rios, selected a group of young football fans for his cast, and in the person of Andres Poggio he also discovered a genuine screen personality. For the first time in the history of the Argentine cinema a slice of contemporary life is shown on the screen, and the result is as refreshing as a draught of cold water on a hot day.

Two months later another studio made another attempt to handle a contemporary theme when A.A.A., the best of the Argentine studios, released *La Calle Grita*, directed by Lucas Demare who has been responsible for some of the best Argentine historical films. Unfortunately, this one fails badly, and for the very reason *Pelota de Trapo* succeeded—whereas Torres Rios could hardly have cared less about "international appeal" Demare has attempted to give his film universal appeal, and the result is a bad copy of an early Capra film. The story consists of an interesting idea, a young man tries to show an influential financial expert that his budgets are no good because they take no account of human weakness. Capra might have been able to make something of it, but unfortunately Demare cannot.

HUMANLY HISTORICAL

Meanwhile three other studios are working on "Street" films, built around famous Buenos Aires centres. Roman Vinoly Barreto is directing a film about the Calle Corrientes—the Shaftesbury Avenue of Buenos Aires—with a young tango composer, Marianito Mores, in the lead; a film built around the Calle Florida—the Bond Street of Buenos Aires—is in production; while Amadeo Nazzari has started *Calle Arriba* as his first Argentine film. Whether these films will give any idea of what life is like in Buenos Aires it is too early to say, but at least they are in modern dress.

Even amongst the historical films there is at least one in which the accent is on the human element rather than the nationalist spirit. This is *Tierra Del Fuego*, a story of the colonization of that bleak and inhospitable land during the nineteenth century, which brings Mario Soffici back to the type of purely Argentine films which he has made so

well in the past, and escaping from the literary type of subject (*Jealousy*) in which he has been bogged down recently. Soffici is a director who is happier out of doors, so for *Tierra Del Fuego* he took a unit of actors and technicians on location to the extreme south of Argentina, and the film, as a result, has some authentic backgrounds although the emphasis is on the characters, of whom the principals were played by Pedro Lopez Lagar and Sabina Olmos, who played so well together in that otherwise bad film *Spanish Serenade*, and the director himself. The film is similar in many ways to the better of the American outdoor films.

Finally S.I.F.A., recovering from their surprise over the reception given to *Pelota de Trapo*, are now making a film which arouses misgivings. According to the publicity, *Su Ultima Pelea* is designed to do for boxing what *Pelota de Trapo* did for football. It is being directed by Armando Bo and Jerry Gomez, co-star and co-author respectively of the previous film. A unit went to New York to shoot some sequences in that city, and presumably everyone is waiting for the film to duplicate the success of its predecessor and, if it does, no doubt a cycle of sporting films will follow. There is plenty of room for humanity in the Argentine cinema.

MEXICAN SCREEN-ART

By

H. H. WOLLENBERG

IN ANY COUNTRY it is the creative mind—and of those there is never an abundance—on which the growth of a truly national film-art depends. Think of D. W. Griffith and John Ford, Mauritz Stiller and Victor Sjostroem, Eisenstein and Pudowkin, F. W. Murnau and Pabst, Abel Gance and René Clair, Rossolini and Zampa and, last but by no means least, of Carol Reed and David Lean. In each case there was the fortunate accident of a personality gifted with true film sense and inspired by the background and very climate—literally and metaphorically—of his country.

Mexico too has such a personality: Emilio Fernandez. It was mainly due to his work, his faith, his fanaticism and, indeed, his genius, that the hitherto almost non-existent and certainly unknown Mexican Cinema was “put on the map”. When at the various post-war International Film Festivals, Mexican films put in an appearance, their achievements found immediate recognition, even if an admixture of surprise.

Above all, it is their outstanding pictorial merit which gives so distinguished an air to representative Mexican films. A country fascinating in its scenery, its picturesque people and its unique atmosphere was disclosed, reflected, brought to life by camera artistry of extraordinary competency.

The man who first discovered the cinematic potentialities of the Mexican scene, however, was no native of that country: in fact, he came from far-away Moscow. It was the late S. M. Eisenstein who, in 1930, enthralled by all those untapped pictorial riches, brought back from Mexico a lorry-load of exposed celluloid. The film he had in mind was never completed though and *Thunder over Mexico* and *Time in the Sun* are the only existent relics of his efforts. Later, the American director, Herbert Kline, followed in

the Russian's footsteps. His picture *The Forgotten Village* (in association with the famous author, John Steinbeck) is unforgotten and soon other producers, too, began to recognise the country's cinematic attractions. This was so much the case that the idea of founding a national film industry soon took roots in Mexico. What with the vast Spanish-speaking Latin-American markets and the tremendous popularity of cinema entertainment in those areas, the economic basis for an expanding native production was secure.

FAILURE—SUCCESS

Artistically-speaking, the Mexican cinema so far has been a “one-man” effort, practically every important film bearing the stamp of Emilio Fernandez. What with an eight years' apprenticeship in Hollywood, playing “bits” and small parts, Fernandez certainly came up the hard way. It was John Ford, the great Director, who gave him his first chance, and Dolores del Rio who, at the tail-end of her great Hollywood career, came to be the decisive influence in Fernandez's life. Indeed, she started a new and even more spectacular career in her native Mexico.

In 1939 Fernandez produced his first picture in his homeland. Mexico City was sceptical and few shared his belief in native production. The resounding financial failure of his first venture seemed to bear out such doubts and for a time his plans seemed to be in jeopardy. Yet, in 1941, his tenacity was rewarded with spectacular success. The picture's title was *Pepita Jeminez* and while, both technically and artistically, it left much to be desired, the film had a most successful run all over Latin America. No less successful financially was his next production: *Flor Silvestre* (co-starring Dolores del Rio and Pedro Armendariz), even though, this too, was not much more than a Spanish version of a conventional Hollywood production.



La Hosteria del Caballito Blanco

Emelco Films

At any rate, Fernandez now had the opportunity to be his own independent producer and, from then on, the Fernandez—del Rio—Armendariz team had every chance of developing artistically in its own way and, indeed, of going from success to success. As a matter of fact, Dolores del Rio (meanwhile married to Fernandez) was launched on a new career which outstripped even her Hollywood successes, and the team's fame in the Latin-American sphere has been unchallenged ever since.

But it was only three years after his initial national success that Fernandez and his team rose to world-wide recognition with the film *Maria Candelaria* which, indeed, was the first Mexican picture with which British audiences became acquainted. Next came, *Las Abandonadas* (*The Abandoned*), showing all the way from New York to Buenos Aires.

In 1947 a new star arose: Maria Felix. Her resounding

success in *Enomorada* and (1948) in *Maclovia* made her almost as popular as Dolores del Rio.

At the more recent European Film Festivals, Fernandez's latest and most important productions shown were *La Perla* (*The Pearl*) and *Rio Escondido* (*The Hidden River*). In collaboration with his old friend, John Ford, and with his old team, Dolores del Rio and Pedro Armendariz, Fernandez produced *The Fugitive*, which has been seen in this country, and won distinction at the Venice Biennale.

Summing up and seeking the common denominator of the work of Emilio Fernandez, I would call him an exponent of Romantic Realism. Social problems and conflicts are faced and contrasted, and the complexities of the human mind are pictured in the light of their natural background. Man and his fate are invariably projected on to larger issues and in every one of his pictures the peculiar beauty of the Mexican scenery plays a decisive part.

FILMS FOR HUMANITY

Are they possible?

By

Father JOHN A. V. BURKE

THERE IS MUCH TALK among the film intelligentsia at the present time on the subject of Art and Freedom. Can the cinema be free? In my opinion there are two considerations which make it impossible—Finance and Philistinism. It is not easy to say which of the two has had the more baneful influence.

The film world is enshrouded in an atmosphere of crisis. To the layman the whole situation smacks of the lunatic asylum. On the one hand we hear much about film quotas and the desirability of letting the American distributors have more space in which to teach our young ways of life as seen and practised in U.S.A. On the other, we hear of studios closing and technicians dismissed because the native product is not making enough money. This seems to be the greatest madness of all. People are still paying to see films and appear to be willing to go on doing so indefinitely. A curious phenomenon; the films that are being produced are costing more and are worth less. With rare exceptions they are devised for the mentally moronic. It is little compliment either to the makers or the buyers of cinema entertainment that the queues continue to line up outside the local supply centres.

CRISIS

There is no doubt that from the point of view of film as Art a state of crisis exists. One clue to a correct diagnosis of the trouble is to be found in the overwhelming importance attached to money. In the words of Marcel L'Herbier, Founder and President of the Paris Institute for Advanced Cinema Study, "The iron hand wherein producers grip the cinema is, unfortunately, enclosed in a golden glove". A ruthless commercialism controls what is, in effect, the only true modern Art; controls it in such a way that instead of being, like the other and more ancients arts, an uplifting and beneficial influence to mankind in general, it has become largely a debauched and degrading opiate.

Nor are those films which have pretended to contain a spiritual message been very much more satisfactory than those produced for purely entertainment reasons. There is a new puritanism still extant deriving from the artistic heresies of the mid-Victorian era: mock-Gothic, Albert Memorial, "Eric, or Little By Little", and the whole world of sanctimonious literature and painting which has done so much harm to true religious sentiment. Films that have been made in the same self-conscious frame of mind as the makers of the monstrosities I have mentioned have succeeded only in producing self-conscious religiosity instead of true religious art expressed in terms of film. We can still number on the fingers of one hand the films that

since the war have had both artistic integrity and economic independence: *Open City*, *Vivere in Pace*, *Monsieur Vincent*, *Visitation*, and probably *Louisiana Story*. There have, of course, been other films which have had high artistic merits, films that convey a message to humanity but it has been a message given by slaves because they have been films made under economic conditions that render artistic freedom impossible.

AN AWARD

Maurice Cloche, in an article shortly to be published, writes: "To be a Christian Artist in the Ages of Faith was to be possessed of a vigorous and even audacious poetic imagination, such as nowadays would likely shock the descendants of those men who made possible the great cathedrals, the painters, the poets, artists who did not fear to represent Man with his frailties, his faults, his fleshly weaknesses, but were also capable of showing forth the marvels of the Spiritual Life, the Life of the Soul". Pope Pius XI in his Film Encyclical said: "The purpose of Art, its *raison d'être*, is to assist in the perfection of the moral personality which is man". This is but saying in other words what Cloche has pointed out; the function of the artist is to present the complete man; neither the disembodied spirits of a certain school of pious literature with their impossible saccharine saints nor the gross and sensual materialisations which the modern school of psychiatric cinema would have us believe is liberated man. "Good motion pictures", says Pius XI, "are capable of exercising a profoundly moral influence on those who see them". To quote Maurice Cloche once again, "The cinema is already sufficiently enslaved by the money which has brought it to its present unhappy past for us not to want to add to its servitude by lack of artistic honesty". The International Catholic Cinema Office which has as its main objective the right use of film, that is to say, films which contribute to the moral and artistic perfection of man, has shown itself in many ways desirous of raising the standard of films. That is not to say that it forgets that the primary purpose of film from the point of view of the man-in-the-street is entertainment. But even entertainment, we hold, must be according to right reason. There is, in addition, the whole vast field of the film used for a more serious purpose than that of mere diversion.

The International Catholic Cinema Office offers each year an Award to the film "most capable of contributing to the moral and spiritual betterment of mankind". This is one way calculated to put into effect the wishes of Pius XI that "Nothing harmful from a Religious, Moral or Social

standpoint should come from the Cinema", for it is intended to inspire producers with an incentive to use their medium for good, that is to say, to produce films with artistic honesty; for it is certain that no true artist, whatever be his medium, can produce satisfactory work if he abdicate his moral responsibility or deliberately use his medium for evil purposes.

FOR HUMAN WELL-BEING

It is too easily supposed, on the one hand, that the hold which money has on the film is too strong and too inevitable for the cinema ever to free itself or produce good work, or on the other, that the cinema must prove always to be inimicable to basic Christian morality. As was pointed out by Paul van Zeeland, former Prime Minister of Belgium and present Chairman of the United Europe Organisation, in an interview with the present writer, no group has yet sufficiently explored the possibilities of the cinema as a means of spreading and contributing to human well-being; there has been no serious study of the potentialities of the film in this direction. "Christian endeavours in this field could still, therefore, be an *avant-garde* of film study for the sake of humanity". To quote Pius XI again, films designed "To create or at least to favour understanding among nations, social classes and races, to champion the cause of justice, to give new life to the claims of virtue and to contribute positively to the genesis of a just social order in the world".

It was another step in this direction which was taken at Luxembourg recently when at a gala performance of Fred Zinneman's film, *The Search*, in the presence of the Grand Ducal Court supported by the Executive Committee of the International Catholic Cinema Office, the Ambassadors of Switzerland and U.S.A., a Special Award was given to this film which deals so movingly with the problems of the Displaced Children of Europe. Two years ago the film which received our Award was *Vivere in Pace*. Another move in the same direction was the special projection for the benefit of members of the Belgian Government in Brussels of Maurice Cloche's latest film, *Dr. Laennec*. It is clear that the motives inspiring the production of this film were basically humanitarian in the best sense of that ill-defined word. It is also clear that, like its predecessor *Monsieur Vincent*, it was financially independent, for the money necessary for its production was obtained by an appeal to the general public, those who are willing to pay to have the films they want to see made. Cloche gave a speech on this occasion in which he outlined his aspirations as a film producer; it is to be independent of any force which could hinder the proper development of the art of film.

Pierre Blanchard, who plays the title role in *Dr. Laennec*, seconds both the purpose and the fulfilment of this film in a recent article in which he said, "This film shows the life and work of a man who put the interest of his fellow-men before that of himself . . . it offers to our tormented

world the pacific example of one of the purest geniuses of France".

Another French film in which the spirit of art predominates over that of commercial enterprise is *Le Sorcier du Ciel*. This deals with the life of a priest who, about 90 years ago, at a time when the French Revolution was, in Chesterton's phrase, "proclaiming tremendous truths and tremendous falsehoods", threw down the ancient challenge of the primacy of spiritual values. St. John Baptist Vianney, Curé d'Ars, was a man utterly devoted to his people, and such was his miraculous simplicity and clarity of soul that tens of thousands of pilgrims from all parts of Europe, including Great Britain, made the tiring journey to Ars in the province of Lyons to ask for his counsel and blessing. Georges Rollin, whom we have recently seen as "Goupi Monsieur" in *Goupi Mains Rouges*, plays the part of the Curé. In an article in which he gives his impressions of this film he speaks of the difficulty in capturing for the screen the transcendental qualities of one who, during his life, conveyed the impression of being not so much a living body as a mere "shade", a body through which the soul shone with a warm clarity. "The cinema", says Rollin, "has not yet passed its 'physical' epoch; it thinks and works in terms of image, form, colour, relief. There is yet to come the epoch of the spirit, of thought, of intelligence. Perhaps still later on it will discover the existence of the soul". He goes on to discuss the problems of an art which, encumbered by the material trappings of the studio, has to capture and present the evanescent qualities of a strongly spiritual personality like that of Vianney. It is a problem which has defeated all attempts to solve it hitherto. It is one reason why, for example, no film of a Graham Greene novel has yet satisfactorily suffered the transformation from script to screen.

Rollin recounts that against all commercial considerations and advice he was chosen for the role of Curé d'Ars. He was chosen because it was thought that he could best convey the spiritual characteristics of the Curé in addition to the fact that he bore him a physical resemblance. It is a good thing to know that other minds besides those of Maurice Cloche and his associates are challenging the dictatorship of the Golden Calf. In this country, too, there is being shaped and fashioned a team which is moved by the quixotic idea that films could be used for the benefit of humanity at large; that one could work in the medium of film as men in the past worked in the medium of stone, paint, wood, and on vellum and canvas, leaving their message for mankind without thought of what they were to receive in terms of cash or prestige. Men like Fra Angelico who, out of his skill and the overflowing of his soul, put on the walls of his cell in Florence masterpieces of the art of storytelling in pictures; Jacapone da Todi, poet, lawyer, who has left us the beauty of works like his *Stabat Mater*; Palestrina, who gave to the world the purest and best form of religious music; all men who worked without thought of profit or world distribution, but who have achieved both, not for themselves but for mankind at large. That is why one shrinks with distaste from the idea of any cultural organisation connected with any of the arts being taken over by political parties, whatever colour or texture their shirts or dress-suits may be. To tie the cinema down in bonds of gold or to make it serve a political cause is to deprive it of its greatest glory which is to work for the betterment of the human race.

A FORGOTTEN CRITIC

By

ROGER MANVELL

A Review of Vachel Lindsay's Ideas on the art of the film contained in "The Art of the Moving Picture", first published in America in 1915 and revised in 1922

VACHEL LINDSAY was one of the first writers in any country to realise that the cinema was an art to be welcomed by the poet. Everyone knew by 1915 that the cinema was gaining an exceptional hold on popular audiences, and that its possibilities were great in the command of space and spectacle. This was the year of *Birth of a Nation*, which was preceded by the big Italian classical films led by *Quo Vadis?* and *Cabiria* in 1912 and 1913 respectively. But few people yet realised that the artist as distinct from the showman had any real inspiration to derive from working in such a medium.

Vachel Lindsay was something of a character. He was born in Springfield, Illinois in 1879, studied art in Chicago and New York, and became an itinerant minstrel and lecturer, preaching as he went "the gospel of beauty". He wrote poems for chanting, a kind of religious rag-time to capture the hearts and tongues of a people he felt were alienated from beauty by the crudity of their lives. Poetry, politics and religion were merged in his work, which had an astonishing vitality of free rhythm. He wandered over the States for twenty years until he was exhausted, and he died in poverty in 1931.

His poetry is vividly pictorial, which may account for the attraction the cinema had for him. Take the opening stanzas of his poem, "Abraham Lincoln walks at Midnight":

*It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight, in our little town
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old court-house pacing up and down,*

*Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards
He lingers where his children used to play,
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.*

*A bronzed, lank man ! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.*

In 1915 the Macmillan Company published his "Art of the Moving Picture", a loquacious, excited piece of writing idealising the motion picture for its potentialities. He revised and enlarged the book for its republication in 1922. What emerges from a study of the revised edition is that Vachel Lindsay had the right basic ideas not only for the silent film of his day but for the sound film which he only

just lived long enough to see realised. The films which evidently affected him most were Griffith's *Enoch Arden* (1911), *The Battle* (1911), *Judith of Bethalia* (1914), *The Avenging Conscience* (1914) and, of course, *Birth of a Nation* (1915), Larry Trimble's *Battle Hymn of the Republic* (1911), Ince's *Typhoon* (1914) and the Italian film *Cabiria*. He writes:

"I am the one poet who has a right to claim for his muses Blanche Sweet, Mary Pickford, and Mae Marsh. I am the one poet who wrote them songs when they were Biograph heroines, before their names were put on the screen, or the name of their director. Woman's clubs are always asking me for bits of delicious gossip about myself to fill up literary essays. Now there's a bit".

Lindsay divides films into several categories: the Motion Pictures of Action, of Intimacy, of Fairy Splendour, of Crowd Splendour, of Patriotic Splendour, of Religious Splendour, of Sculpture-in-Motion, of Painting-in-Motion, of Architecture-in-Motion.

Action pictures do not depend, writes Lindsay, on character, but on the pattern of movement:

"Action Picture romance comes when each hurdle is a tableau, when there is indeed an art-gallery-beauty in each one of these swift glimpses: when it is a race, but with a proper and golden-linked grace from action to action, and the goal is the most beautiful glimpse in the whole reel.

"In the Action Picture there is no adequate means for the development of any full-grown personal passion. The distinguished character-study that makes genuine the personal emotions in the legitimate drama, has no chance. People are but types, swiftly moved chessmen".

In contrast to the Action Picture is the Intimate Film, exemplified by the films of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Drew and Mary Pickford (who seemed to Lindsay like a portrait by Botticelli):

"The Intimate Motion Picture is the world's new medium for studying, not the great passions, such as black hate, transcendent love, devouring ambition, but rather the half relaxed or gently restrained moods of human creatures. It gives also our idiosyncrasies. It is gossip in *extremis*".

The film of Fairy Splendour is the film which transcends mere camera tricks and becomes fantasy, while *Birth of a Nation* exemplifies the film of Crowd Splendour, *Typhoon* and *Cabiria* the film of Patriotic Splendour, and *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* the film of Religious Splendour. Of Griffith and d'Annunzio he writes:

"But the mistakes of *Cabiria* are those of the pioneer work of genius. It has in it twenty great productions. It abounds in suggestions. Once the classic rules of this art-unit are established, men with equal genius with D'Annunzio and no more devotion, will give us the world's masterpieces. As it is, the background and mass-movements must stand as monumental achievements in vital patriotic splendour.

"D'Annunzio is Griffith's most inspired rival in these things. He lacks Griffith's knowledge of what is photoplay and what is not. He lacks Griffith's simplicity of hurdle-race plot. He lacks his avalanche-like action. The Italian needs the American's health and clean winds. He needs his foregrounds, leading actors, and types of plot. But the American has never gone as deep as the Italian into landscapes that are their own tragedians, and into Satanic and celestial ceremonials".

Lindsay's most intuitive criticism emerges from his chapters on Motion in Sculpture, Painting and Architecture: he realised the symbolic values of movement and their importance in the meaning and poetry of the cinema.

"The Action Photoplay deals with generalized pantomime: the gesture of the conventional policeman in contrast with the mannerism of the stereotyped preacher. The Intimate Film gives us more elusive personal gestures: the difference between the table manner of two preachers in the same restaurant, or two policemen. A mark of the Fairy Play is the gesture of incantation, the sweep of the arm whereby Mab would transform a prince into a hawk. The other Splendour Films deal with the total gestures of crowds: the pantomime of a torch-waving mass of men, the drill of an army on the march, or the bending of the heads of a congregation receiving the benediction".

He then adds:

". . . the Action Film is sculpture-in-motion, the Intimate Photoplay is painting-in-motion, and the Fairy Pageant, along with the rest of the Splendour Pictures, may be described as architecture-in-motion".

On sculpture-in-motion Lindsay forecasts (in reverse, as it were) the technique of recent films on sculpture (notably Oertel's on Michelangelo and Lucot's on Rodin). He speaks of his conversations with the sculptor George Gray Barnard:

". . . he has talked to me at length about his sense of discovery in watching the most ordinary motion pictures,

(Continued from next page)

There is a film "writer" with a talent for imagining fictions which emerge overwhelmingly funny when materialised before the cameras. The word art probably does not enter his head once in a year. But he is an artist alright: a contemporary artist in the comic idiom. At the other end of the scale are the few endowed with vision enough to embrace the whole sweeping range of the film's visual scope and from it fashion wide windows on the drama of mankind. Surely we should have a more expressive name for these than "writers"?

To say, then, that the film is an art dependent on the inspiration provided by its writers is not to suggest that our film-makers should stop visiting their barbers and should look about for earnest pen-pushers to elevate to semi-sacred

and his delight in following them with their endless combinations of masses and flowing surfaces.

"The little far-away people on the old-fashioned speaking stage do not appeal to the plastic sense in this way. They are, by comparison, mere bits of pasteboard with sweet voices, while, on the other hand, the photoplay foreground is full of dumb giants. The bodies of these giants are in high sculptural relief".

Looking at the Parthenon frieze, the sculpture of Michelangelo and Rodin's group the Burghers of Calais, he comments on their qualities of movement, and calls on the producers of films to create similar human compositions and give them actual mobility.

"Open your history of sculpture, and dwell upon those illustrations which are not the normal, reposeful statues, but the exceptional, such as have been listed for this chapter. Imagine that each dancing, galloping, or fighting figure comes down into the room life-size. Watch it against a dark curtain. Let us go through a series of gestures in harmony with the spirit of the original conception, and as rapidly as possible, not to lose mobility. If you have the necessary elasticity, imagine the figure wearing the costumes of another period, yet retaining in their motions the same essential spirit. Combine them in your mind with one or two kindred figures, enlarged till they fill the end of the room. You have now created the beginning of an Action Photoplay in your own fancy".

The Victory of Samothrace becomes for Vachel Lindsay the goddess of the film:

"I desire in moving pictures, not the stillness, but the majesty of sculpture. I do not advocate for the photoplay the mood of the Venus of Milo. But let us turn to that sister of hers, the great Victory of Samothrace, that spreads her wings at the head of the steps of the Louvre, and in many an art gallery beside. When you are appraising a new film, ask yourself: 'Is this motion as rapid, as godlike, as the sweep of the wings of the Samothracian?' Let her be the touchstone of the action Drama, for nothing can be more swift than the winged Gods, nothing can be more powerful than the oncoming of the immortals".

(To be concluded)

status. It is simply to say that you can't make a good film from an uninspired script.

I venture to think that I and the producer who turned critic on the critics are not worlds apart. What we both want from the British industry are, in a word, good films—films the public will like and tell their neighbours to see, without caring what the papers choose to say.

Where he and I may differ, however, is on the point of view I previously expounded, which, in the light of this present article, may be re-stated as: You can hardly avoid uninspired scripts, and therefore films that are not good, if you reduce their preparation to a matter of mechanically assembling pre-selected components. Your writers must work not from formula but from—yes, our familiar and worthy friend—inspiration.

WORDS AND MEANINGS

By

D. C. SMITH

IN A PREVIOUS ARTICLE I enlarged on the proposition that film-making is an art the core of which is inspiration. Reading it, a friend whose opinion I respect remarked with regret that I seemed to have developed a partiality for the arty and the precious: this, I discovered, because I had ventured to use those two words, art and inspiration, as though they were no more than normal units in a normal vocabulary.

Perhaps I should have known better. Perhaps I should have dealt discreetly in such fashionable synonyms as "specialised skill" and "main idea". For it seems to be the fact that there are many excellent folk about who, though willing and eager to describe a spade with admirable precision as such, buck protestingly when faced with these two perfectly honest and serviceable items of the King's English, art and inspiration, in cold print. Some of them, I see, carry their aversion to the extent of composing clever little comic pieces in which they demonstrate their superior sense by utilising these innocent syllables as a couple of contemptible Aunt Sallies.

The explanation is easily found, of course. "Art", "inspiration", and all their colleagues of the creative classification, have long been sadly abused by heavily haired gentlemen who have cried them ecstatically and whispered them wide-eyed with appalling abandon. But surely that is inadequate reason for shunning them hereafter. One might as well, and with much more justification, relegate "freedom", "democracy" and "peace" to one's list of quaint linguistic antiques.

DIFFERENT WORDS

Well, then, if we eliminate the spurious aura by which misuse has surrounded them, what are we left with after all? What does one mean by art? By inspiration?

These are big questions—as big as human nature, no less; but, like human nature, they relate to fundamentally simple things and can best be discussed in simple terms.

Let us for a moment recall my accusative friend of the first paragraph. Here is someone whose assessment of particular films is often close to mine. Yet he will not utter "art" or "inspiration" except reluctantly and with embarrassment, and the peak of the praise a visit to the cinema can call from him is, "That was a jolly good picture". Therein lies the whole of the point I want to make now. Probably it has been made often enough and more capably before, but it is still frequently overlooked. It consists simply in this: that different people use different words to say the same thing.

This is particularly pertinent to any discussion on the quality of British films now, because if it is forgotten in the clash of argument, divisions seem apparent which do not really exist.

One of our most enterprising producers lately took a tilt at the professional critics, suggesting they favoured films which sought to elevate rather than to meet the public taste. This is, of course, a naturally prejudiced charge; but I think it is true that the Sunday-paper Solomons do not always succeed in avoiding their occupational ailment of cinematic surfeit, and I believe the general public do know good films from bad much more surely than is sometimes assumed. The film is a uniquely popular art. Its appeal is universal. Its material is sight, sound and movement—the direct, strong stuff of everyday life, which ordinary people know a good deal about, though many of them are not able to articulate their understanding very clearly. If a film is poor they will discern it, though they may accord it no more comment than "Tripe". If a film is inspired they will discern it, though they may merely say "Jolly good".

Art and inspiration, in fact, are no strangers to the Browns and the Robinsons and (if I may say so) the Smiths. It is simply that the meaning of the words has become petty and devitalised in the popular view. In truth, Mr. Stanley Matthews with a football at his feet is an artist—and at the pitch of his form he may certainly be called inspired. A mother carefully rearing a family is an artist in the most vital sense—and deep and manifold are her inspirations.

Inspiration, in other words, is no remote abstraction, but a magnificent commonplace. And art is no more nor less than inspiration made manifest.

Inspiration springs in many places and art has many forms. Our specific concern is the film. This, as I have said, is a popular art; and the significance of its popularity is that it communicates itself readily to people with no conscious thought for fine subtleties.

In my previous article I suggested that a film's initial source of inspiration is the writer. Here we have another word which has been misused, though after a different fashion. "Art" and "inspiration" are good sound words which have been cloaked with a false unpleasantness. "Writer" is really a strictly limited and practical word now used to signify something much bigger than its true scope. Actually a writer is simply someone performing the act of writing: any schoolboy at his homework is a writer. But it is now the practice to apply the word to those who record their ideas for a living. The writing part of their job is merely an incidental automatic labour, often performed at dictation by a secretary. A so-called writer, in fact, may do very little writing at all.

A "writer" of films does not—or should not—even think primarily in terms of words, but of audible images. He might conceivably be incapable of writing a well-phrased letter, and that would be of secondary importance so long as he could adequately indicate how to relate his story in telling pictures.

(Continued on previous page)

IRISH DOCUMENTARIES

By

JOHN GERRARD

A SURVEY OF THE NOT SO INCONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF FILMS WHICH HAVE COME SPASMODICALLY FROM IRISH PRODUCERS REVEALS THAT THERE HAS EVER BEEN A DISTINCT TENDENCY TOWARDS DOCUMENTARY TREATMENT EVEN WHEN DEALING WITH FICTIONAL PLOTS—AN UNDERSTANDABLE TRAIT IN A NATION WHERE THE SHREWD, FACT-LOVING PEASANT MIND IS SO PREDOMINANT AN INFLUENCE.

Significant is the fact that the pioneer in the blending of the art-film with the realist record was the son of two emigrants to America from the West of Ireland, Robert Flaherty. His first effort was, of course, *Nanook of the North*; portraying the struggle for existence of the Esquimaux against his normal social background it contained the elements of the true-to-life film for which there is now, happily, an increasing demand, films such as *Grapes of Wrath*, *Pasteur*, and the memorable *Scott of the Antarctic*. Perhaps the most fearless worker in the same field has been another Irish-American, John Ford.

The first film ever made in Ireland is believed to have been the record of Queen Victoria's visit to Dublin in 1900, a copy of which is still treasured by the Irish Film Society. Within a few years local news-reels became quite common but it was left to a touring unit of the American Kalen Company to essay *Rory O'Moore, Ireland the Oppressed*, a primitive documentary concerning the exploits of outlawed patriots in the 18th century. The British Home Office expressed its disapproval in such vigorous terms that the remaining productions, seventeen in all, were sentimental trash though they were "planned to kill the idea of the stage-Irishman as well as to explain the Irish pride of heritage and the injustices of Ireland's past". In 1914 another company made *Ireland a Nation*, presenting the life of Robert Emmett and an account of the Home Rule movement. A Dublin unit portrayed *The Days of St. Patrick* quite effectively, though it was rather unfortunate that as he landed the horizon was marred by the small but unmistakable shape of a tramp steamer! *Knocknagow* (1917) was an ambitious but disappointing effort to depict old-time life in Tipperary as described in the famous novel.

During the next few years film-making was somewhat neglected, but with the coming of the "talkies" Victor Haddick took the initiative of expressing the *Voice of Ireland* which, however, contributed no more to documentary tradition than a pleasant travelogue enlivened by neatly introduced songs from Richard Hayward.

In 1932 *Man of Aran* was made for Gaumont British by Flaherty and while he was in the country the Irish Government seized the opportunity of inviting him to produce a sound-film in Gaelic, *Oidhche Sheanchais (A Night of Story-telling)*. Unfortunately he was obliged to use a script from the Department of Education and this confined him to the uninspiring subject of an old man telling tales at a cottage fireside.

The Dawn (1937), a romance of the guerilla warfare in 1921, owed its modest success to a realist setting and to the fact that most of the players were representing roles which a short time ago they had fulfilled in grim reality!

The following year brought a scientific film, *Poula-phouca*, recording comprehensive experiments made with a large-scale working model to solve technical difficulties encountered during the construction of a dam at Phoula-phouca for an important Hydro-Electric Scheme to serve Dublin. When the project is completed a complementary film will be made for the purpose of contrasting the laboratory tests with their practical results.

GOVERNMENT AID

The Irish Government, though quick to appreciate the value of documentaries, could not afford to be other than prudent in offering commissions until the war-time emergency made it essential to organise and spur various forms of national effort.

Special encouragement was given to the Army Publicity Section which undertook news-items films and then developed rapidly into a scenario department in miniature, producing an average of two or three short features each month.

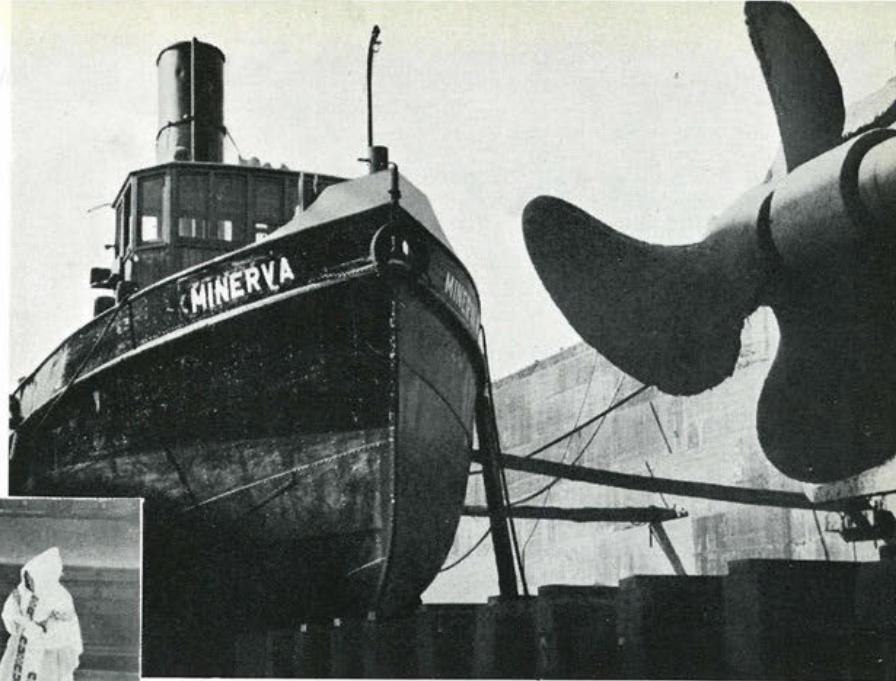
The Corps of Engineers starred in an exciting and instructive account of the demolition of Blessington Bridge in connection with the Phoula-phouca Scheme (quite a few birds were killed with this stone!). A very popular documentary presented the work of the Marine Service and the training of its personnel, being succeeded by a feature on Port Control and another on the laying of mines by a flotilla of motor torpedo boats. Next came the Air Corps, Infantry, the Motor Cycle in the Army, Local Defence Force units on manoeuvres and the Construction Corps engaged in tree-felling, re-afforestation, and turf-cutting. With the co-operation of a Dublin hospital *They Give Their Blood* was made to demonstrate blood transfusion and broadcast an appeal for more donors.

The Irish Red Cross, despite comparatively lavish expenditure on Aid to Europe, was in a position to sponsor productions to assist its post-war drive against tuberculosis. Of particular interest were the three puppet films made with the help of members from the Dublin Marionette Group. At present the National Film Institute is planning a series to explain the type of preventative measures to be taken, stressing their proven value.

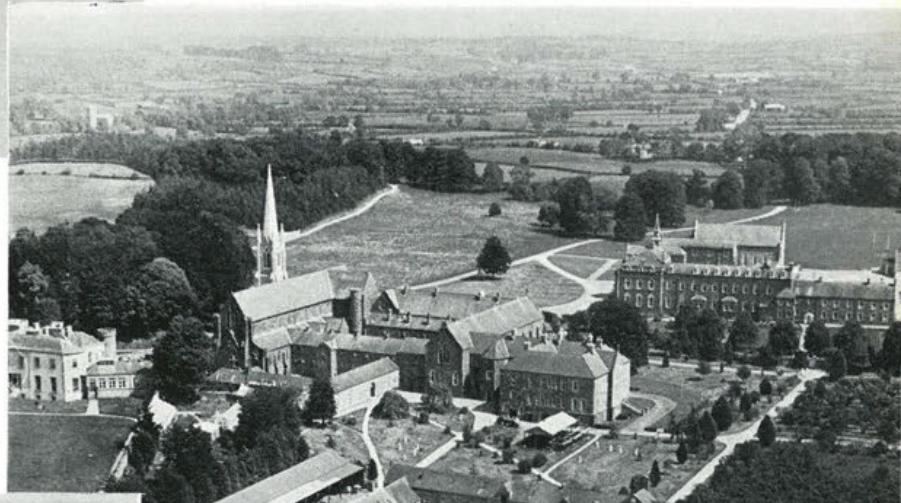
The relaxing of petrol restrictions heralded the launching of a vigorous Road Safety Campaign by the Government, films being commissioned to instruct not only motorists but also wayward pedestrians and feather-brained cyclists. Most effective so far has been *Next Please*, a dramatic, humorous and forceful production from Hibernia Films.

Irish Sh

Irish Shipping (Hibernia)



Cistercian Abbey (Hibernia)



Cistercian Abbey



Irish Shipping



Hibernia Films has been particularly active and laid a solid foundation to their enterprise by securing contracts with British news-reel companies; the association led to more important offers such as a survey of *Michael Davitt* and his battle for the Irish tenant farmers. They also completed for the Irish Government a most interesting "short" *Atlantic Window*, dealing with the country's airports. As a contrast they made a film for Irish Shipping Ltd.

Alive to the value of films for training purposes is the Gaelic Athletic Association and a number of instructionals are to be made to encourage young hurlers and Gaelic Footballers. Last year a unit was sent to New York to record a match between two teams on tour from Ireland.

With regard to educational films the National Film Institute has managed to complete a small portion of its ambitious programme of productions suited to the particular requirements of Irish schools.

George Fleischmann, once a camera-man for U.F.A., has done much to advance documentary in Ireland and recently photographed for Abbey Films the celebrations in connection with the 150th Anniversary of the 1798 Rebellion, combining shots of the parades with views of the battlefields, neatly punctuated with shots of relevant paintings such as the Execution of Lord Edward—thus avoiding the expense of costumes and actors!

As a supporting feature for the Catholic missionary film *Visitation* Mr. Fleischmann made *Drogheda Story*, a brief documentary about the town and its industries. The interesting variety of material inspired him with the idea of undertaking a series dealing with the historic towns of Ireland and he is now co-operating with Liam O'Laoghaire on *Dublin*. This film should be particularly interesting as it is intended to make an effort to portray the different social aspects of this lively capital; so optimistic are the promoters that they plan to dub sound-tracks in French, German and Swedish.

Irish scenery has, of course, been boosted from time to time by the production unit of the Tourist Association but few attempts have been made to present the normal life and ideas of the people.

My Country (Civic Films), completed in a fortnight, was a forceful documentary made for a political party which wished to prove that the country was going to rack and ruin; it offered nothing constructive beyond a hint to vote for the sponsors!

More progressive should be *These are the Times*, a short story-documentary undertaken by members of the Irish Film Society. Beginning with an emigration scene, it concerns the shortage of houses in Dublin and encourages the organisation of public opinion to demand an improvement in the methods of dealing with the crisis.

Another group plans to make a film protesting against the Partition of Ireland, a problem which continues to distract Irishmen from playing their full share in the alliance against the enemy of Christianity.

Less serious and perhaps more interesting to the general public will be *Singing River* on which Dublin Films began work in April. Based on a novel by Philip Rooney it will be on documentary lines and deals with the intriguing situation of an American of Irish descent who returns to the ancestral home on the banks of the Boyne and finds modern Ireland a strange contrast to the nostalgic notions which he had been taught to cherish!

THIS AND THAT

To the Editor

SIGHT AND SOUND

Sir,—I am sorry that I deprived Miss Jane Mussy of the credit for directing *Your Children's Sleep*. I restore it to her gratefully. And if *Charting the Seas* had music which I didn't hear, it must, according to some theorists, have been a model score.

But (emerging from "apology corner") when I wrote *Charting the Seas* (G.B.) Mr. Brian Smith is being parochial and offending his particular talent for shrewd observation if he thinks that I was referring in parenthesis to the Rank Empire and not the British Empire. All films quoted in my article were so annotated.

Yours faithfully,

MERVYN REEVES

Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

Sir,—I thank you for the several appreciative remarks made in your review of my book "Practical Projection for Teachers". In the review, however, your contributor refers to a single "inaccuracy in the presentation of fundamentals" and proceeds to discuss the function of the projector shutter. He complains that "the uninstructed reader would not be able to gain from it (the book) the real significance of two- and three-bladed shutters". As the creation of the optical illusion of the motion picture is dependent on many other factors in addition to shutter design, it was my feeling that such considerations were quite outside the scope of a book with the title "Practical Projection for Teachers".

On page 47 I made it clear that my description was only a bare outline of a whole range of scientific facts. For further information the reader was referred to the books and filmstrips listed on page 89.

Yours faithfully,

NORMAN J. ATKINSON

Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

Sir,—Mr. Donald Sutherland's article on American publicity in Britain, "Bogus Ballyhoo", seemed to hit the nail on the head at the time when I read it in No. 67. In the meantime, however, a piece of evidence has come my way, which makes it extremely doubtful whether our native publicity boys are any better.

I am talking of one of those publicity sheets intended only for the exhibitor to advise him as to how to advertise, publicise, and present the film in question. I am quoting from the sheet:

PRESENTATION OF A MOST UNUSUAL FILM
... it has a magic touch of genius about it ... it has everything, but the treatment is unlike anything yet seen on the screen! There is LOVE, HATE, DRAMA, SUSPENSE, HUMOUR, CYNICISM, ACTION, BEAUTY, TENDERNESS and a curious WHIMSICALITY that creeps into the story. THE WAY THE STORY IS TOLD IS NEW AND THRILLING. The very title of the film is intriguing. . . . Behind this film there is a mysterious something. . . . It is a new and thrilling excursion into the realms of storytelling.

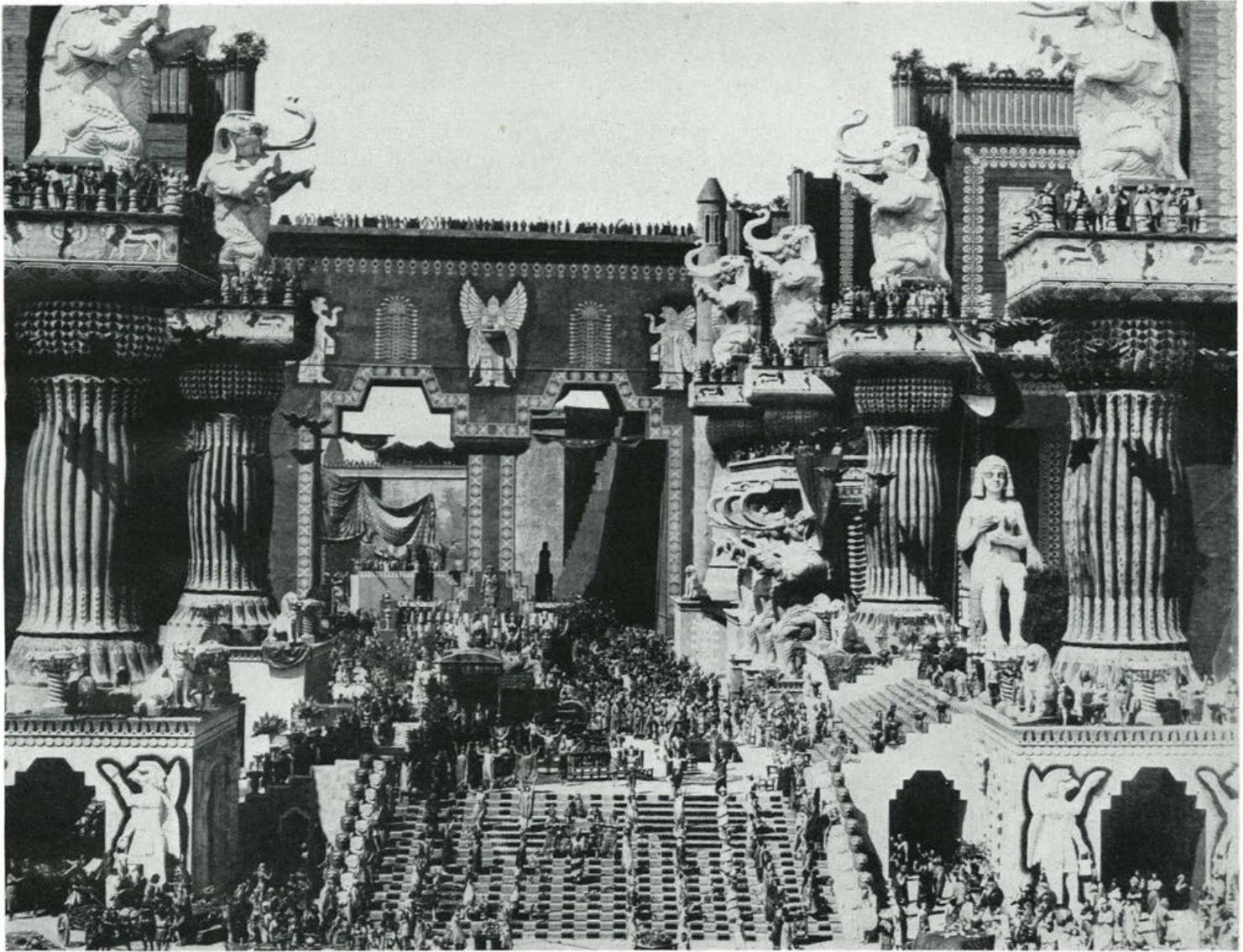
I defy anyone to tell from these excerpts what British film is thus described. It seems to be some third-rate, half-anonymous, completely unoriginal little thriller, to judge from these frantic efforts to say nothing in as many words as possible. However, the last lines of this masterpiece of ballyhoo writing contain the cue:

The key of your publicity and advertising should be one of intrigue. What happens on the giant staircase? What happens when a boy is faced with the power of lies? These are angles with a magnetic box-office pull!

Yes, it's all about *The Fallen Idol*—one of the two or three top films from the 1948 British crop. But the chap who wrote that publicity sheet seems to be capable of boosting a masterpiece into insignificance with his laboured list of magnetic box-office pulls. I wonder if this is the general standard of publicity advice from Distributor to Exhibitor.

Yours truly,

EGON LARSEN



Intolerance

National Film Library

RUSH HOUR IN BABYLON

By

J. C. TREWIN

BY NATURE, though not from necessity, I am an Alexander Selkirk: that is to say, I think in terms of desert islands, the unpathed wild, the high, bare moor, the deep wood, the purlieus of Threadneedle Street on a Bank Holiday, and all performances of *Mary Rose*—more particularly when there is a poor house, though this, as you know, can be seldom. Some of my favourite lines are those by (I believe) a Controller of Stamps, about the inward eye that is the bliss of solitude. Often I wander lonely as a cloud and shudder when I see a footprint on the sand or hear the note of a human voice.

Probably it is because of this that there are certain times in the year when, perversely, I have a craving for crowds, for seething and tumult, and for what Coriolanus, in one of his less tolerant moments, called “the mutable, rank-scented many”. The craving comes about once a month: it may be about the time of the new moon, though I have never checked with a calendar. Now and then on these

occasions it has been hard to satisfy myself. The last train to Southend has gone, or there are “House Full” notices at the New Theatre, or it is a “Fellows only” Sunday at the Zoo. My remedy at such infrequent crises is simple: I go to the cinema, and I am rarely disappointed: go to it, I hasten to explain, not for the crowd around me but for the celluloid muster itself, the swelling mob upon the screen. Once or twice, for this is to be expected, I run into something groping and psychological, three characters in search of an author; but usually I have all the crowds I want, and that without the fatigue, the dusty answer, of milling among them.

Lately, by a superb stroke of good fortune, I managed not merely to find my crowd but to recover my childhood as well: here one could say indeed that fortune came with both hands full. David Wark Griffith, I am persuaded, made *Intolerance* for me and me alone. I am sure of it. It is some thirty-one years since, a boy of eight, I saw it first

in, of all places, an old gilt-and-plush theatre in the West of England: a theatre, now vanished, that could never at any hour have looked like a cinema. Without, it was all Ionic columns and shining stucco; within, it was a world of green plush and gilded caryatides. In the pit you sat behind a wooden barrier, topped by red American cloth, that you hammered with both feet when applauding Frank Benson or Fred Terry. In the gallery you peered with increasing vertigo from an eagle's crest. There were numerous and opulent boxes. Trafalgar was always being fought on the drop-curtain, and the artist, one H. Pedgeon, had signed himself lavishly in the bottom left-hand corner.

It was a legitimate theatre, a "touring" theatre, a theatre that the Old Laddie actor would enter and recall with pride. And yet, one strange week, I saw a film there. I saw, in fact, *Intolerance*, with the cradle rocking and the Fates in the background, the siege-towers moving on Babylon, the chalk on the houses of the Huguenots, the race between thundering engine and fantastic motor-car. I was submerged in those crowds that poured over the screen like ants from a displaced anthill. And with every shout from that afternoon in 1918 clamouring yet in my ears—for in no silent film were you ever more conscious of noise—I was properly aggrieved when my adored local cinema in North-West London murmured that *Intolerance* had not been shown in public for thirty-two years.

This may be right, of course; but I doubt it. They had forgotten my Theatre Royal. They did not know that I had been a king in Babylon and repelled the towers of Cyrus. There I had observed, for no apparent reason, "The fragrant mystery of your body is greater than the mystery of life". There I had quaffed my dozen goblets in a banqueting-hall a mile in length (authorities in small type at the foot of the caption). And there I had made innumerable circuits of those massive city walls. How many miles to Babylon? Three score and ten! Nonsense. In my day it was just around the corner. David Wark Griffith could flip you there (by candle-light or what you will) in a twitch of the screen. It was glorious the other evening to lose myself again among those surging, upholstered, waterfall-bearded masses; to see the goddess Ashtar looking, just as I remembered her, like a vast bland figurehead; to watch the night siege in smoke and flame—surely one of the most dramatic shots in the record of the silent screen—and almost to hear the deep twanging of the bow as the Mountain Girl, with those extraordinarily bright eyes, let the arrow fly in defence of Belshazzar the King.

Griffith, I repeat, made *Intolerance* for me. Never were such crowds as these. You do not find them on the screen to-day, or, if you do, I have missed them. I sat in my two-and-ninepenny seat lapped in sheer bliss, jostled by the murderers of St. Bartholomew's Eve (Catherine de Medici snarling up in the palace), hustled by the Pharisees in the streets of Jerusalem, elbowed by the strikers outside the factory—bad news for the father of the little dear one—and falling like a plummet, at regular intervals, down the steep, slippery walls of a Babylon beleaguered. As I watched, it all came back to me. For years I had not thought of *Intolerance* in detail; but scene after scene, caption after caption, leapt from the quivering sheet. Here was the villain in the wing-collar. Here was the loom of fate weaving death for the boy's father. Here was the marriage-broker remarking "Tish! Tish! 'Tis no place to eat onions". Here was the musketeer of the slums, here the broken love-

nest, here Prosper's tragic dash, here the army of Cyrus moving beside Tigris (or was it Euphrates?) in the glimmering dawn. Mobs and armies; banquets and battles; brawls and street scenes; "Hatred and Intolerance battling against Love and Charity"; four separate stories cutting into each other and mightily puzzling late-comers; the beloved princess at her window, the priest of Bel at his; Mae Marsh and Constance Talmadge and Bessie Love, and the scent of oranges. . . .

The scent of oranges! Surely not. Yes, there in front was a boy of 1949 peeling his orange among the forays of Bartholomew's Eve just as, in the old Theatre Royal, the boys of 1918 would peel theirs while the uplifters of the city stole Constance Talmadge's baby (or was it Mae Marsh's?) from its mother's worshipped cot. Everything as it should be: two hours and a half flicked by in ecstasy until the four stories had gone their way, Griffith reached the last muddled moments during which it is best to look for hat and scarf, and I passed into the odd, frosty silence, the empty, dark street of the nighted suburb.

Someone stumbling out behind me said: "I couldn't bear the crowds". It was not for her that Griffith made *Intolerance*. To-day I am back in my Selkirk mood, flinching if the telephone rings, hiding from the postman, and thinking with relish of Polar emptiness, drear cliffs in Sutherland, Blackburn in Wakes Week, and the frigid, hopeless deserts of the burned-out moon. Even so, I can think still—and with delight—of *Intolerance*. No crowds could madden less. Long ago I saw *The Birth of a Nation*, but to-day I remember very little about it, though I was taken by a kindly soul who told me which army was which and why they were fighting, and assured me now and then that it was all uncommonly instructive and I was a lucky boy. Maybe it was; maybe I was. No doubt the plot was as shattering as the crowds were vast. But let me have *Intolerance* any day: Love's Struggle Through the Ages; that curiously moving sentimental caption, "In the good old summer-time", the boy (husband of the little dear one) with the queer resemblance to Chaplin, and always the crowds, the crowds, the crowds, Griffith's delight in thinking of a number and multiplying it.

It must not be assumed that I am laughing at *Intolerance*. Die the thought. *Intolerance* may derive from 1916, but it remains an exceedingly fine film. If all museum-pieces were like this, what an exhilarating place a museum would be!

I am not arguing about film technique, or the subtleties of cutting, or asking whether Griffith was justified in running his four stories together, or why he roughed off his work in a vague blur of goodwill to all. No; here I am saluting *Intolerance* solely for the memory of its crowds, for the pulsing excitement of it all, for the racing cohorts that to-day would be gleaming in purple and gold. I shall think often of *Intolerance* in future, during plays peopled meagrely by a quartet of soul-sieving bores and a telephone, lounge-hall conversation-pieces for six, or ingenious little two-hour dramas written for three people and a folding screen. I shall remain a Selkirk and a solitary; but Griffith will linger in my mind. Already I feel sad that when next the crowd-fever shakes me, there can be no *Intolerance* at the little cinema around the corner, no crowd, no hum, no shock of surging men. I may be misquoting, but this will do. For although *Intolerance* has gone, Babylon must still trample on my heart.



Baseball at Ebbett's Field

Columbia Broadcasting System

A GLIMPSE OF THE HOLLYWOOD CAULDRON

By

JOHN H. WINGE

"Now I know what became of the men who used to take the pictures for passports: they are running the television cameras."—FRED ALLEN.

A SURVEY OF 8,275 independent film theatre owners reveals that 89.7% of them sell candy, soft drinks or both. Exhibitors' pleased comments run like this: "The take in confection is about 27% of the box office dollars".

Only 3.6% sell through machines or lease out the concession. The balance maintain their own counters and sales organization and have promoted five minutes intermissions between films to help the sales of sweets which sell for about twice as much as before the lifting of the price ceilings. 81% of the theatres sell sweets, 53% popcorn (a 10c. bag means 8½c. profit), 51% soft drinks, 42% chewing gum, 22% salted nuts, 18% ice cream, 17% pretzels, cigarettes, sandwiches, hot dogs, comic books and aspirin.

American exhibitors have also stated what kind of pictures its audiences like to take with their sweets and aspirin: Westerns ("A first-class western has never been a box office failure"), Outdoors ("It means pictures in which action prevails over dialogue . . . Nature, kid and animal pictures . . . seem to be sure-fire at the box office"), Comedies ("Not used to include the old-fashioned comedies of manners . . . Comedies are absolutely sure-fire if the scriptwriting is good, the direction sharp, the acting first class, and there is at least a semblance of a story . . . The people are hungry for laughter; mix it with a little romance and the picture cannot fail"), Romance ("Theatre audiences never tire of love although, curiously, the word in the title of a picture does not seem to help it . . . Like comedies these should be low-budgeted pictures because lavishness of sets and costumes are relatively unimportant"), Musicals

("They can be absorbed in moderation but some new formulas must be devised. In this connection, one exhibitor explodes, 'For God's sake, quit making backstage musicals, because we all have seen the same plot with some variations about 69 times in recent years'"), Crime ("There have been too many mystery pictures in recent years and the public is getting fed up"), Horror ("Most exhibitors think the zombies should be locked up in a closet and kept there"), Drama ("Some think the day for good, clean drama is not past and would like to see more of it").

"Fortune" magazine has examined American leisure activities and found out that 38% of the people interrogated believe that there are fewer good pictures being shown now than two or three years ago; 23% said the opposite; 30% sighed and couldn't see any difference; 9% had no opinion. The ladies numbered radio listening as their top pet leisure activity; 2, needlework; 3, visiting friends; 4, reading books; 5, motion pictures. Here follows the revealing little difference between the sexes: the gentlemen's number one, radio listening; 2 (no needlework but), watching sports; 3, visiting friends; 4 (not reading, that's for sissies but), outdoor sports; 5, playing cards; 6, motion pictures.

UNEMPLOYMENT

One of the main points of the present reorganization of the world's largest film making plant, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, is "the acquiring of story material reflecting topical subjects and developments of interest to that portion of the public representing the growing adult and educational levels of the population".

"Public reception of the *Snake Pit* and *Gentlemen's Agreement* gives me courage to face realism in pictures", declares Darryl F. Zanuck and announces "one social drama" a year to be produced by himself for Twentieth Century-Fox.

The gentlemen on the crest neither mention nor feel that over 50% of the film crews have been on the dole for a long time and that unemployment among the talent groups is even higher. They talk about great and optimistic production increases but little of it materializes. They blame many things for Hollywood's frightening slow down, for instance, foreign markets, domestic unemployment (it had showed up earlier in Hollywood than anywhere else), television, theatre divorce.

But Arthur Loew, president of Loew's International, wishes "to dispel the impression that foreign business is extinct". He even expects "conditions for our foreign markets to improve" and financial restrictions to relax. M.-G.-M. now operates 130 branch offices in 56 foreign countries. There its 16 mm. products alone have done an annual business of 2 million dollars. It owns studios in England, France, Italy and Germany where it can produce pictures with funds frozen there. This set-up is opposed by Hollywood labour, though. It urges the removal of "artificial discriminatory trade barriers which are forcing U.S. film producers to make in foreign countries movies made for the American market" and "a ban on exhibition in this country of American films made overseas". The current American economic policy increases the scarcity of dollars abroad, however, and this helps extend Hollywood's foreign production schedules.

TELEVISION

Returning from a trip to Hollywood, vice-presidents Royal and Denny, of the National Broadcasting Corporation, told "Variety" in New York that "certain of the major film companies will be turning out special two-reelers for television within a year, but under an entirely different trademark" to prevent the theatre owners, already nervous, from turning against them. They have warned the studios that release of films made for theatres to television stations will be fought "by such action as is legally permissible".

"The threat of TV to theatres raises a challenge to make theatres more attractive for the community", states F. A. Weller of the Independent Theatre Owners of Southern California. "We have to attract the children and family trade and progress beyond the popcorn-selling stage. We are planning soda fountains and juke box bars for the teen-agers where they can spend time after or before the show and even watch TV shows. It will take well over five years until TV will produce its own big features. Meanwhile, its novelty might attract a few people temporarily, but they will soon return to our lavish and colourful shows. Perhaps Saturday football games will one day be shown directly on our screens but we are not that far yet technically".

TV-film producer Jerry Fairbanks says that 57 TV stations are now operating, construction permits for another 66 are issued, more than 313 applications are now pending before the Federal Communications Commission, N.B.C. alone plans to have 32 stations and affiliates on the air in the immediate future and about 1,000 are expected by 1953. Paramount's Hollywood TV station announces that one of every ten families in the Los Angeles area owns a TV set, i.e., one set for every 47 persons.

So far TV shows are expensive, live ones as well as on films. Klaus Landsberg of the Paramount station gave this breakdown for a 30-minutes show: station rent \$300; writer \$75; producer (with 10 hours for preparation) \$100; cast of six \$150; sets, props, etc., \$150. "The total is painfully close to \$1,000", he wails, and calls the figure a minimum. Personal research, however, reveals that wages for talent are usually even lower and many actors, writers, directors offer their services free "to get in on the groundfloor" and are accepted. No union protects them.

In spite of this TV-films, running 20 minutes, are supposed to cost even \$10,000; they leave openings for commercials to be mounted later on. In potential sponsors these figures have induced a robust coldness toward TV-films although their makers are spieling these super-values: "In televising theatrical pictures, deep shadow effects lose their effectiveness and sometimes turn white on video receivers. Long shots blur and it is difficult to recognize players. TV film should and must be shot expressively for telecasting. New lighting techniques must be used, long shots avoided and TV's small screen and limited grey scale kept in mind during production. . . . We are using much more camera movement than we would use in theatrical filming because of the close grouping of players . . . where half-figures are the rule. . . . The camera must be centered on the players because of the curvature of the TV receiving tube. . . . Rapid pan shots will blur; large sharp lettering should be used in all titles. . . . Sets are smaller . . . so that a larger section of the background is visible to the viewer thus creating more atmosphere. Larger sets would show a

smaller section of the background because filming for TV necessitates the camera being closer to players and sets. Long shots have to be played "broader" to be recognizable. Time periods will be 10, respectively 20 minutes as compared to 15 or 30 minutes in radio because so much more can be told and shown on TV. We believe that TV will require films for 50% of its programming—it will eventually total a need for more than 300 hours of film a week. . . . The trailer will advertise new products. . . . Top quality pictures attract an aggregate audience of only 25 millions. TV eventually will be seen by more than 90% of the nation's population. In short, exhibitors will enter 37 million homes with their trailers and attract roughly 50 million more ticket buyers to their box offices". (Jerry Fairbanks.)

"Hollywood has the richest production resources. Where else can you find a costume house able to outfit 100 Revolutionary soldiers by morning; round up, in hours, 500 horses for a cavalry charge; have a French palace or a frontier saloon sent out together by truck or build an earthquake for *San Francisco*? . . . Labour will come in at a price". (Hal Roach, Jr.)

"RADIO'S EYES"

"The major film studios will have to sub-divide their big sound stages into smaller studios for TV film production. Each stage should be complete with its own carpentry shop, lights, make-up departments, etc., so that it would be possible to shoot a group of pictures at the same time. Then by swapping sets, costumes and even actors it will be possible to trim sets considerably. Shooting on 16 mm. rather than 35 mm. stock, will also save. . . . I have dubbed in laughter of various degrees after every comedy sequence to ease up the small home audience of TV and an announcer read aloud the credits as they appear on the screen so that viewers who might be in another room can get to the set when they hear a name that interests them. . . . Live programmes are good only for quiz shows". (Rudy Vallee.)

And what is the official opinion of Louis B. Mayer? "I am often asked about TV how it affects motion pictures and what part we shall play in its future. At present, it seems to be more an adjunct of radio, giving it eyes, as the advent of sound gave the screen its voice. Frankly, I have yet to learn from anyone connected with TV as to how they expect to achieve revenues that will enable them to pay for entertainment comparable to the motion picture".

A report by Don Frick, of the advertising department of the Rexall Drug Stores, sounded like an optimistic reply: "I remember in the early part of summer we discovered that we had carried over a small quantity of metal picnic boxes from the previous year. It was quite a large insulated metal box with separate waterproof container in which could be carried enough ice to keep the contents of the box cold. The boxes had been priced at \$10.00. So we reduced them to \$6.95 and presented them on TV. We had 83 'phone orders plus heavy calls at all of our stores. We sold out completely and had to wire some of the warehouses in other regions to fill the orders. . . . For the retailer with proper merchandising and presentation, TV does pay off".

Spyros Skouras envisions a nation-wide theatre video hookup, joining thousands of film houses and concert halls

with grosses three and four times greater than now, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*.

Louis de Rochement, former *March of Time* producer, believes that TV will destroy the film industry. "Already we know that the traditional Hollywood cost pattern cannot be used in making TV films. Many of these films will have to be made on location, for reasons of economy, and the East offers a wide range of natural locations which are lacking on the West Coast".

TV is a revolution in American homes, too. It lures housewives from work, it keeps the tired businessman from studying the funnies, it shortens the sleep of the young. "Time" magazine featured a photograph of a model room as displayed by a New York department store—a nightmarish transfiguration of a living room into a dwarfish theatre exposing the backs of the members of the family to each other plus TV, radio, phonograph and a puppet theatre. An ingenious combination of electronics, furniture and salesmanship to bring in your home, too, the busy emptiness of the brains of people thousands of miles away yet bursting to prove it to you.

The minds of the American people have been clogged up by most of its press, radio and films for such a long time that TV cannot do much more harm. But TV's birth pangs disclose some of an evil mire that seems to be out to blanket the scenery. The distinguished jurist M. L. Ernst has commented that it takes "at least one million dollars to go into TV. This means we will have competition between a thousand millionaires (to run the thousand TV stations expected). This means also that there will not be much diversity of basic attitudes and points of view". Mr. Ernst believes that the American people—who rather have been liking their press, radio and films being run by and for private interests—will one day demand that the government take over TV. "This is a frightening concept", he admits without any further explanation, "even more frightening than having this great new pipeline to the mind of man in the hands of only 1,000 millionaires".

While M.-G.-M. is striking the post of aloofness Paramount, Twentieth Century-Fox and Warner Bros. have come out as parties definitely interested in TV. Warners intend to buy a radio and TV station Los Angeles and San Francisco each but are waiting for approval by the Federal Communications Commission. The well-known oil magnate, Edwin A. Pauley, wants these stations for himself. If permitted to buy the stations Warners would also make and distribute TV films.

Twentieth Century-Fox had negotiated to buy the American Broadcasting Company; the talks have stopped but might be taken up soon again. A.B.C.'s chief stockholder and chairman is E. J. Noble, maker of Lifesaver drops and former Under-Secretary of Commerce. He had bought the network for 6½ millions. Fox is supposed to have offered 20 millions or more for the stock or a part of it. A.B.C. owns a nationwide radio network and five of America's most powerful radio stations. Each of these runs a TV affiliate or is building one.

Paramount owns a substantial, and perhaps a controlling interest, in the Allen B. DuMont Laboratories. DuMont is one of the large manufacturers of TV receivers. It owns three TV stations and has applied for two more because under F.C.C. rules not more than five TV stations can be owned by "one set of interests".

But DuMont has two classes of stock, A and B. Paramount owns all of the B stock and is the second largest holder of A stock. It is entitled to select three of the eight DuMont directors and four of the six officers. No cheque is good without the signature of DuMont's treasurer who is also Paramount's vice-president. Paramount does not call this a "control" of DuMont and therefore feels justified in asking for licences for five more TV stations of its own. Three other companies believed to be Paramount subsidiaries or affiliates have applied for TV stations, making it a total of 13. In a preliminary decision, F.C.C. has concluded that Paramount does control DuMont and proposes to deny five of the ten DuMont-Paramount applications. But Paramount will fight this decision through the courts.

Following an 11-year-old suit of the government against the eight major producers charging them with a conspiracy

to throttle competition Paramount has agreed to sell 774 of its 1,450 theatres to a new company where it must not hold a majority and to set up a second company to operate its remaining houses, its TV stations and to produce its films.

H. M. Warner, one of the Bros., invokes at this occasion: "God bless a country that could have made it possible for us to build a business which at one time caused an indebtedness to banks of 180 millions; a company that now gives employment to 24,000 workers . . . I don't believe that it is the desire of this great country to tear down what has been built and we are not going to permit this destruction now or at any other time. The courts of our land may demand it, however, we don't believe they will".

In other words—Warners want to keep all of their theatres and are going to fight the government for its anti-trust action.

LEADING THE BLIND

By

PENELOPE HOUSTON

THE CRITIC IS AN ARTIST, practising the minor art of criticism, or a frustrated artist, driven from the centre of performance to the outer ring of criticism. In either case he owes more respect to his art than to his public: if he fails to consider his public he will not be read, if he fails to consider his art, he will not be worth reading. He must see in perspective, must relate the present to the past, must create in the confusion of contemporary art that illusion of shape and order which the artist himself can never afford. But whether he is an occasional writer who can afford to generalize, or a weekly critic who must fight to retain his standards against the onslaught of the cheap and trivial, he remains an artist. He is not a tipster, commentator, or publicity agent. Sometimes, he has to defend himself.

He is pulled in every direction at once by demands made by those who have their own ideas of his job. The public accept the fact of art, and reject its positive impact: they expect to be told not whether a novel, play or film is a work of art, but whether it will give them the relaxation, the excitement, they want. The trade resents critics who fail to forecast box office winners. The cinema is an art forced by economic conditions to appeal to everyone: in the trade's opinion, the critic is the spokesman of the intelligent minority, when he should speak for the masses. He is treated like a difficult child, smiled on when he behaves well, hurried from sight when he is tiresome, quoted or explained away. The affaire Arnot Robertson, and Korda's truculent advertisement jabs at "ungenerous" critics shows the sensitivity of the trade to critical pin-pricks.

This would be unimportant if the critic was himself more confident. Film criticism has a very short tradition, has had no time to acquire standards. To nine out of ten people, fifty years after the first moving pictures flickered across the screen, the film is not an art, is no nearer to being an

art than it was then. To the tenth, since the cinema tends to breed wild enthusiasms, it is *the art*: he must prove his point. It is easy to talk about film appreciation, to bow before the names of Griffith and Eisenstein; but this is a long way from the weekly double feature, the outpourings of Warner and Gainsborough. It is easy for the critic seeing only a small selection of documentary to yield to the comforting illusion that all documentary is worth while: he ignores the tedious rubbishy programme fillers masquerading under the name of documentary in every cinema. Is the critic certain in his own mind that the cinema deserves serious criticism?

EXASPERATED OUTCRY

He is governed by three considerations: his personal taste, without which he is nothing, his estimate of the value of films to the audience for which they are intended (he cannot condemn all musicals on sight as too many do) and, more difficult, some absolute standard of values. Whether absolute standards of criticism in fact exist, is impossible to say: we cannot define them, we have to act on the assumption that they are there. We must assume that films deserve serious criticism only if we accept the cinema as an art form. It is some time since Miss Lejeune's remarkable announcement that she "was ready to declare categorically that films are not an art", that "film makers should leave all the pompous talk of art alone" (*Observer*, September 14th, 1947). This exasperated outcry by a much respected critic shook the whole critical position. It forced the critic to take a longer and more determined look at films: behind the happy-go-lucky hit or miss judgment there either was or was not some idea of what films ought to be.

The answer to Miss Lejeune's categorical declaration is short and straight and obvious, and on it hangs the film critic's whole defence. No amount of debasement can alter the fact of art: if any film ever made can be called a work of art, then we are dealing with an art form. Critics who concentrate on pleasing their public forget this when they overpraise the second rate, and condemn the experimental failure. An instance is the recent critical attitude to two very different films. *Red Shoes*, a mediocre and dishonest work, was generally praised (although its faults were recognized): it was very popular. *Summer Holiday*, a real experiment, spoiled by numerous obvious faults, in the art of the musical, was ignored, treated as "just another musical": it has had no general release. The cinema can achieve effects which cannot be made, or cannot be made so easily, in any other art. A film moves. It pin-points essentials, bridging time and space, conveying instant detail, using a mental shorthand which allows us to take in the most subtle impressions. We receive two impressions at once: we see, and we hear, and the film is the integration of pictures and soundtrack. Perhaps the most important educational value of the cinema is that the most simple audiences accept on the screen subtleties which they would never understand in print. The claim that the cinema is an art form is easily proved.

pretty well; but he should do better. His standards are dulled by the rubbish he survives, and for this reason I would put the life of the average critic at about ten years: three to learn, four to practice, three more to forget. After that, he is likely to become a hack, a cynic, a defeatist.

BLIND SPOTS

We can understand his difficulties. He sees the occasional good film not in relation to works of its own stature, but against a background of the puerile and infantile; every film rising a little above the average is greeted with relief bordering on ecstasy. He is taken in by elaborate and pretentious hokum cleverly designed to seem "artistic", he breathes in the familiar dishonest air of the studios. He is liable to lapses of judgment, to strange enthusiasms and blind spots. These usually attack all the critics at the same time, and the unanimity of London critics sometimes appears suspicious to those outside the ring. For instance, in 1945 (most critics would probably admit this now), everyone was seized by a patriotic fit: every British film seemed another nail in Hollywood's coffin, and this encouraged judgments which, seen in perspective, look a little queer. Generalizing, one can say that critics tend to ignore quality in musicals (*The Pirate*), in Westerns (*My Darling Clementine*), in the adventurously unusual (*The Small Voice*): that they overpraised French films in the thirties, and Italian films in the forties, and that the patriotic or buy British critic, who still exists, has driven himself into a very tight corner by adulation of the home product. The critic is given no help by his public, since educated people in this country do not take the cinema seriously. They do not deny that there can be good and bad popular art, but they are not interested in art which is compelled by economics to be popular. They resent the suggestion that they are being hypnotized and spoon-fed. While this attitude persists, films will live down to it, and critics will be unhappy.

ENTHUSIASM VITAL

On the positive side, the critic must be an optimist, a cinemane, using up superlatives far too frequently, eternally hoping for the best. He is not a box office tipster: it is easy, on Sunday afternoon in Leicester Square, to guess which will be the longest queue. He is not a missionary: he cannot teach differences between good and bad to those who fail to realize that difference exists. He is a guard over industry and public: especially, he protects the public against the worst aspects of the industry. He has a certain influence: critical outcry secured the showing of a valuable, popular documentary, *The Way We Live*, after exhibitors had rejected it. The critic must give readers what they want: he has to live. More important, he must respect the cinema, understand what directors try to do, think in film language. The average critic should know more about films: a clear mind and a distrust of hokum are not enough. In the last analysis, the critic must be an enthusiast, seeing behind the drug, the entertainment, the mechanical tricks, the economic force, the propaganda machine, to the newest, most popular, most talked of, and least understood of the arts.

NO MORE THAN STYLE

The secret of the cinema is the balance and co-ordination achieved between the work of many artists—director, writer, camera-man, editor, actor. This complex mechanism does not, as sometimes claimed, destroy the film as a work of art; it does add to the critic's problem. The average reader is not interested in technicalities, the average critic is no technician. He finds difficulty in assessing the contributions of so many, he realizes that if he takes the film to pieces to examine it he has still not answered the fundamental question: is it good or bad. Certainly, concentration on one aspect of filming tends to blind one to the whole, but this is no argument against technical knowledge. Some critics claim that if they interpret the film to the average man, they should see it as he sees it. This is nonsense: the more one knows, the better one can evaluate. An instance is the later technique of Orson Welles: his early films were fascinating in subject as in style; in *The Lady from Shanghai* he dressed up a second rate thriller with a pretentious, sterile and alarming apparatus of trick shots, clever angles, and sound effects clearly designed to catch the eye of the critic. This was too obvious a trick for the majority, but the most reputable have been fooled by technical slickness imperfectly disguising essential mediocrity. Technique is, after all, no more than style.

The critic has his defence against the public, against his own doubts. It is easy for textbook writers to recognize the highest. One sometimes feels that they never really go to the cinema, only occasionally refreshing their memories of *Caligari* and *Potemkin*. The weekly critic has no such austere concentration. Considering everything, he does

THE PRICE OF FILM MAKING

By

ERNEST BETTS

THE QUESTION what a film should cost, in normal times a matter of accountancy and routine, seems to have become an obsession during the past year or so of crisis in the film industry. "Economise or perish"! is the cry, though many have perished without being given a chance to economise. One would suppose that one had only to attach a label to a new picture: "Reduced to £100,000. Tremendous Bargain!", for the major problems affecting production to disappear, and for the artist, the craftsman, the technician and the stage hands to come into their kingdom again.

But the slashing of a film budget to its barest minimum can mean precisely the same as expanding it to its maximum—that is to say, nothing at all—unless other things are taken into consideration at the same time. The introduction of such devices as the Independent Frame system no doubt opens the way to more economic methods of filmcraft, but it has never claimed any monopoly of virtue in this respect, it merely pursues to their logical ends processes already well known wherever films are made. Yet the system bears the mark of an individual mind striving to fight the abuses and follies and wastages of film production and reduce them to order. Films such as *Stop Press Girl*, *Floodtide* and *Poet's Pub* have shown at least that the cost can be reduced and that the system works.

We really need a new reckoning of all these elements—the cost, the quality, the method, and the need of the individual to discover his rightful place, his chances of self-expression, among them.

We are always hearing a great deal of lofty discussion about the film being a creative art but an art, unfortunately, which is also wedded to commerce, and therefore somehow different from other arts and somehow different from commerce. But what these differences are, and more important still, how they can be adjusted and defined, is never explained. The truth is that the artistry of the film is an accident, an imponderable; the commerce is a constant and measurable. Of the two, we know that the commercial interests, like the poor, are always with us.

During and since the war, the average worker in a film studio has gained in stature, knowledge and responsibility, and he wants to know a good deal more about the film than what it costs. If he lacks interest in it, it may be because he knows that it is costing too much, that it is being made inefficiently, that it deals in a trivial way with something serious or in a pretentious way with something trivial, or with a subject that has been repeated over and over again to the point of nausea and can reflect no credit on British films.

The price, therefore, may not only be too costly in money but in the demands it makes on the loyalty and interest of those engaged in the film. One of the basic problems of the film crisis is how to restore this loyalty and interest. As long as it is money, and money only that matters, these things cannot be restored. To quote Ruskin, who is more

fashionable now, "If your fee is first with you, and your work second, fee is your master, and the lord of fee, who is the Devil, and not only the Devil, but the lowest of the Devils".

Yet to talk of fees and the Devil, when thousands of people in pictures have been thrown out of work, is a piece of irony becoming to nobody. The devil of it is that these fees, for great numbers of people, and from whatever motive, are not being paid.

Out of all this chaos of cross purposes and tangled finance we know at least one thing: that the million-dollar picture has failed the British film industry, for it cannot find its market, and that now all the talk is of the smaller picture, economically made and reduced to common sense.

We need a picture which will not only pay its way but will give some inspiration to those engaged in it. The fun seems to have gone out of the job and the best of craftsmen soon get bored when this fate overtakes them.

The creative artist, in whatever department of cinema he works, is not really interested in the price of a picture, whether it costs a hundred thousand pounds or a million. He is not and should not be. What he is interested in is the creative job and the opportunity to become absorbed in it.

To my mind the restoration of this interest is the paramount need of filmcraft now. The cinema has lost its soul and is living on mythical millions which have betrayed it all along the line. The spirit is willing but the cash is weak.

Is it, however, so simple a thing to revive that spirit of excitement and interest which launched the movies to success nearly two generations ago? When there was no money, no vast studio rental, no gilded scripts costing tens of thousands of pounds, no talk of stars taking cuts in salaries, there was one thing—life in the picture and success at the box-office.

We cannot go back to this across the years and it is by no means a simple thing to change, as by a miracle, the structure of the film industry. But it is this structure, all the same, that gets in the way and leads to Government reports such as the Gater Report and the Portal Report, which are nothing less than an enquiry into why our films are not a success, why they are so costly, and what are the obstacles hindering them.

One obstacle is that the actual makers of films are never given sufficient responsibility for the things they make but receive 100 per cent. dictation about their own business from renters and distributors. The distributor is interested solely in cost, the producer solely in making a good picture, and never the twain shall meet. But there is also an *idée fixe* that the independent producer, attempting to make a "cheap" picture—that is to say, a picture which does not waste tens of thousands of pounds—is not interested in the box-office and is indifferent to whether his work succeeds there or not. I do not know why this view persists and I

have never heard it from independent producers themselves who are well aware that unless their pictures bring back the cash they will promptly go out of business.

My conviction is that a little more authority for the independent and a little less from Wardour Street would mean less crisis and more pictures. It is melancholy to think how little real confidence exists between the two sides, how, on the one side, cost entirely dominates the issue at the expense of ideas and, in the other, ideas are considered to dominate the cost at the expense of "box office". A good idea is money: money is not always a good idea. If that were so we should see some profit to-day from the millions that have been squandered away, frequently by producers and directors who were forced to make films of which they totally disapproved.

A second obstacle hindering our films and befuddling the budget is a lack of policy regarding the programme. It is quite clear that only the big combines can afford to make the prestige picture costing anything up to £500,000, and it is equally clear that there is a desperate need for large numbers of smaller pictures. But where is the plan to give order and purpose to such a programme? It does not exist.

There should be a free market in these smaller pictures and it should be open to anybody of competence and

experience to make a film for £50,000 or £30,000 without feeling thoroughly ashamed of himself, or that because he has spent so little he cannot expect equal exhibition with his more powerful rivals. *The Thin Man* was made for £37,000, *The Private Life of Henry VIII* for £53,000, and everybody can point to big successes of small pictures in which the cost had very little to do with it, except for one important thing. As it had to be small, everyone worked for the picture and not for the money. Few people starved but everybody was a good deal more inspired than we find them to-day and in a craft which employs artists inspiration is not a luxury, it is a necessity.

One day some adventurous soul, bored or disgusted with the purposeless drift of studio "policy", will go out into the wilderness and make a film quietly and cheaply with a few choice spirits and it will be a success. It will ring a bell in hearts and box-offices. Then everyone will be commanded to go and do likewise and that will be the policy for the next few weeks.

The secret is in getting those few choice spirits together and on no account declaring that the film was produced below budget. And one way and another, I notice, this is being done.

THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC FILM ASSOCIATION

*A Report on Progress by
C. H. SYLVESTER*

AT THEIR SECOND CONGRESS held in London in October, 1948, the International Scientific Film Association members charged their Council to undertake a comprehensive programme of work.

The Council consists of its officers:—

President ... M. KORNGOLD (Poland)

*Vice Presidents Mr. JOHN MADDISON (Great Britain)
Mr. C. A. BURMESTER (Australia)*

Hon. Treasurer M. LUC HAESSAERTS (Belgium)

Hon. Secretary M. JEAN PAINLEVÉ (France)

together with six other members representing South Africa, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Italy and The Netherlands.

The method of working chosen was by Sub-Committees, comprising representatives, selected for their special knowledge in each particular field, from member countries of I.S.F.A. In a few cases only has it been possible for the members of the various Sub-Committees to meet, and most of the work has therefore been carried out by correspondence.

Sub-Committees were set up to consider and report on the following subjects:—The Constitution of I.S.F.A., An I.S.F.A. Review or Bulletin, Exchange and Distribution of Films Internationally, An International Film Reference Library, an Index Card and Catalogue, and International Production in Common.

CONSTITUTION OF I.S.F.A.

Mr. Chapple of Great Britain was appointed Chairman of this Sub-Committee, which was faced not only with amending the draft constitution to ensure that it met all the points which had been raised at the Congress, but also to see that the French and English versions were each a faithful translation of the other. Each member of the Committee is now considering part of the Constitution and they will meet shortly to co-ordinate their work.

REVIEW AND BULLETIN

M. Haessaerts (Belgium) was appointed Chairman of the Bulletin Sub-Committee, which is handicapped by lack of finance on the part of I.S.F.A. At the Congress all members agreed that the dissemination of information about scientific films and allied matters was extremely valuable but that it would be necessary to start on a modest scale. M. Haessaerts has been in touch with a publisher in Belgium and is asking member countries what contributions he can expect and what circulation would be likely. If suitable response is forthcoming, it should be possible to start publishing a small bi-lingual Bulletin in English and French.

EXCHANGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF FILMS

In these days when the distribution of food and goods is beset by difficulties of currency control, quotas and all the other complications of a post-war world, the problem of

exchanging films may seem to be almost insuperable. One of the difficulties is that a special service is required for viewing since Governments are somewhat wary of allowing the import of a film purporting to be educational, which might be either suitable for commercial exploitation for entertainment purposes, or of a propaganda nature.

The British Commonwealth has a system whereby any film certified as of an educational nature by the Ministry of Education can be imported free of duty by other members of the Commonwealth. This grading is carried out by the B.F.I. on behalf of the Ministry.

The International Scientific Film Association hope that eventually Governments will allow free import on an I.S.F.A. Certificate that a film is of a scientific nature and it is suggested that such films might be classified under three headings:—

- (A) Research Films.
- (B) Instructional Films.
- (C) General Scientific Interest Films.

Obviously this is a long term plan, but meanwhile a Sub-Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. C. A. Burmester of Australia is working on it. The draft proposals, already published by U.N.E.S.C.O., have also been considered.

As an interim measure much may be done by bilateral agreements such as that recently concluded between Great Britain and Denmark.

AN INTERNATIONAL FILM REFERENCE LIBRARY

After the first Congress in Paris in 1947, the Brazilian Delegation offered to present to I.S.F.A. the films that they had shown. No library facilities being available at I.S.F.A. Headquarters in Paris, enquiries were made to find a suitable location and as a result the Belgian Government generously offered to establish and maintain an International Reference Library of scientific films and to donate a selection of Belgian scientific films if other countries would do the same.

The Congress welcomed the proposal and also an offer from M. Toeplitz, President of the International Federation of Film Archives, to hand over his responsibilities so far as scientific films were concerned. It is intended that films should not be available for loan but that students should be able to find under one roof all available films on any one subject and thus to select which films they might wish to acquire.

M. Haessaerts (Belgium) was appointed Chairman of the Sub-Committee and he is now negotiating with the Belgian Government on matters of detail and when these are settled, Governments and private sponsors will be invited to present copies to the International Scientific Film Association for placing in the library. It is hoped that this request will meet with a generous response as the library will be the means of introducing films to a much wider audience than is normally available with a consequent increased demand. At a later date it is hoped to establish a similar library somewhere in the American Continent.

This Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Loose (Netherlands) had wide terms of reference. Not only were they to decide on the size and format of a data card and to investigate means of publishing a Catalogue of Scientific Films but also to consider how an International system of Appraisal might be devised so that the valuation of a scientific film in one country might be understood and accepted in any other country.

This latter point is of great importance. Those who find the British Film Institute monthly Film Bulletin of value in selecting a film to see for an evening's entertainment, can surely appreciate how essential it is to be able to read an objective criticism of a film before one buys or borrows it for teaching purposes, or for scientific study. So many film titles are either ambiguous or even downright misleading.

The Committee have made great progress with the data card and have produced a specimen which will be considered by I.S.F.A. Council and circulated to members, and it should be possible to get it accepted not later than this year's Congress in Brussels in September. The S.F.A. of Great Britain has done a great deal to work on data cards and they had one in use for some time which was taken as the basis of the card evolved by the Sub-Committee. Perhaps also the S.F.A. appraisal procedure, which is also in use in Canada, may prove the basis of an international system.

INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTION IN COMMON

The Chairmanship of the Sub-Committee dealing with this subject, which is perhaps the most formidable which I.S.F.A. has undertaken, was given to Mr. Arthur Elton (Great Britain). The Congress decided that I.S.F.A. should concern itself with films of pure science and research only and leave to other bodies films for science teaching in schools and for junior age groups.

Congress accepted the Sub-Committee's definition of a scientific research film as one which (a) "illustrates phenomena not observable or demonstrable in other ways, or (b) shows known processes in ways impossible by other media so that new and positive contributions may be made".

In broad outline it was hoped that a permanent Film Production Committee might be set up which would suggest and select subjects and co-ordinate the work of film production throughout participating countries.

It is suggested that I.S.F.A. might take one theme of international reference, *e.g.*, oceanography and make themselves responsible for a film or films which though financed internationally would nevertheless be made in one country with the co-operation of international subject experts in the script stage. Or alternatively, a series of films having the same terms of reference might be made, each country contributing one film on a particular branch of the subject, *e.g.*, diseases of plants.

The Council is studying other methods by which films may be internationally produced and, what is by no means one of the least important corollaries, what distribution can be expected for any film that may be made.

The programme which the I.S.F.A. Congress chose was a wide one, and the Council might well have considered that it was too ambitious. It is to their credit that they accepted the various tasks and the progress they make will be watched with interest. It is unfortunate that SIGHT AND SOUND goes to press at the same time as Council of I.S.F.A. sits in Paris, so that it is not possible to obtain a completely up-to-date appreciation of progress.

The 1949 Congress in Brussels in September will, however, enable members of I.S.F.A. to decide whether to embark on further projects for 1950 or whether it will be necessary to spend another year working on the ones they have already in hand.



Kalpana

Uday Shankar Production

“KALPANA”

By

WINIFRED HOLMES

THE FIRST IMPACT of Indian art on the Westerner is to startle him with its tropic richness and fertility, its emotional warmth, its complexity of images and entwining patterns. Used to colder, more austere lines he feels repelled. He finds too that he is lost in a world of hidden imagery and symbolism to which he has no key. It is only after he has lived for a time in the climate of Indian life and thought that he grows to understand and appreciate a harmony which has been created through hundreds of years of continuity, a harmony composed of metaphysical thought and a strong national character and emotion. He understands that the key he sought is the expression of a complex inner life through outward terms. He may find this expression in the dynamic carvings on the walls and pillars of a temple, and in the classical music of *vina*, *sitar*, drum, or in the epic writings of the great Hindu period—that is,

if he is a Sanskrit scholar—or today he may find it in a feature film.

A paragraph from the classic Sanskrit book, the *Harshacharita* of Bana, who lived in the 7th century, will show how the Indian genius works through metaphor, imagery, colour and a flowery allusive style. “He” (the Gupta king, Sri Harsha) “was sitting on a throne made of a stone clear like pearl . . . and bright as the moon with its feet of ivory and its surface cool to the touch like snow-water. . . . The sun seemed to seek his permission to rise, as its beams rested on the back of his footstool supported by jewelled feet; the day made its reverential march round him, while a clear space was kept in the centre . . . and so displayed the ocean of his beauty which was white like sandalwood, boiling as it were into foam through the heat of his heroic passion”.



Kalpana

Uday Shankar Production

FLORID

This florid baroque style is natural to India but foreign to us. It is difficult for Westerners to appreciate Indian feature films as to a large extent they are made in the same style. Unfortunately they are not always free from the dangers inherent in the style—lushness, vulgarity, melodrama. In the new Indian feature film, *Kalpana*, shown privately in London recently, imagery, symbolism, highly coloured emotion and metaphor are all used to the full, and to appreciate it some knowledge of the Indian mind is necessary as to appreciate *Hamlet* or *Great Expectations* it must be essential to have a knowledge of English literature, national style and character.

Kalpana is a Sanskrit word which means imagination. The story is of a dream within a dream within a dream, and it is doubtful whether the film would attract the general public here as they would be lost in its waves of symbolism. But for specialised audiences it might well have an appeal as well as in interest value and it is to be hoped that a shortened and re-edited version with sub-titles (it is in Hindi) may find its way to specialised cinemas in London

and other big cities. This is only a hope: there seems little possibility of it happening at present.

. BUT CLEVER

Kalpana was conceived, written and produced by the great dancer Uday Shankar who was the first, before the war, to open up the world of Indian classical dancing to the West. On the strength of his dancing he was given the necessary finance to open a school of dancing and music at Almora, in the foothills of the Himalayas. But owing to differences and jealousies within the school it broke up some years ago; the dancers and musicians scattered. Since then Uday Shankar has been living and working in the South of India, dreaming the story of this film. Finally, through the help of a friend, he obtained the finance to make it and five years ago it was started. It has only just been finished.

Shankar's inexperience in film-craft and the general conventions of studio work in India have led him into some mistakes of technique and content. Certain vulgarisations have crept in; there is far too much back-cloth and too little real Indian background; there is too much flashy art-direction, the glitter of a frosted *Dewali* card; yet there is so much that is alive in the film, both of dancing and of ideas, that they can be forgiven.

In addition there is first-class Indian dancing and music. Some of the dancing follows the classical lines; but much of it has been conceived in film-terms as in *The Red Shoes*. Shankar himself takes the chief part and dances all through the film. Although he is past his prime in dancing his technique is unimpaired and he is a gifted and experienced actor. His wife, Amala, plays opposite him and dances gracefully. There is not a single film-actor or actress in the picture; some of the parts are played amateurishly, but in the case of the second female part, Kamini, an actress has been found of outstanding natural gifts. During the course of the film, folk and classical dances from all over the sub-continent and even from Indonesia and Ceylon are shown. In the many dream sequences Shankar is able to get away from set styles and traditional dances. He shows a real choreographical talent in his interpretation of modern impressionist themes through the use of traditional dance movements and gestures. For Indian dancing to remain a vital art and to regain its place in community life its scope must be broadened to express themes which are vital to the new India which is just emerging.

One such dance-sequence is "Industry and Machinery". To us, it seems dated, back to *Metropolis* or even to William Morris. But not so for India which is facing the problem now of how much to welcome the new techniques of industry and machinery and how to compensate the loss of freedom of the worker, taken from his piece of soil, and protect him from the instinct for exploitation in human nature. The problems of 19th century Britain are present in India today, and this dance symbolising the slave-condition of the factory worker has a sociological importance.

The other dance, which appealed greatly to the predominantly Indian audience present at the private showing, was a burlesque on the academic education brought to India by the West, which produces B.A.'s and "failed B.A.'s" who have difficulty in getting jobs afterwards as they are redundant. A row of girl-graduates, in mortar-boards and gowns, all in horn-rimmed spectacles, are receiving their diplomas. They bow and shake their heads pompously

much to the delight of the audience. The fathers of the girls appear and mock at them and they suddenly fling away their caps and gowns, and revealing their pretty saris underneath, they dance a dance expressing revolt from foreign influence.

The story of *Kalpana* is a complicated one. A Brahmin boy, Udayan, living in a North Indian village, is different from the other boys in that he only cares for drawing and painting and spends much of his time dreaming. His playmate is a little girl of the same tastes, Uma. The children dress up and take part in a travelling village show, acting and dancing in a small booth, watched by the delighted peasants. When their fathers discover them there is trouble.

Grown up, Udayan at last persuades his father that he must be free to take up an artist's career of some sort. He leaves home and goes to Benares where he meets with a group of young people who want to revive the old arts of their country. He writes a film script of his dream of an art, dance and music centre where these ancient arts can not only be revived but revivified by the introduction of new themes vital to the new country. He goes to the offices of a film magnate with his script—an eager young man—and waits in the outer room till the great man is ready or willing to receive him . . . and he dreams. . . .

He dreams that his dreams come true. The school is started up in the foothills of the Himalayas and gifted young musicians, dancers and artists join them. These include two girls, Kamini and Uma, his playfellow of long ago, grown-up. Both girls are dancers but Kamini thinks more of her love for Udayan than for her art. She has helped him once, and now claims him for her own. Uma, on the other hand, is devoted to the work of the school and

does not allow her growing love for Udayan to get too much hold on her. Kamini is jealous and tries to harm Uma, but is frustrated and finally defeated. Udayan realises his love for Uma and they marry.

In the meantime the school is going strong and for their first venture they announce a Spring Festival of Dances of India. Every kind of dance is represented, from the classical *Bharat-Natyam* of South India; the religious dances connected with the god Shiva; the fantastic dance-drama of Malabar, Kathakali; the charming devotional Manipuri dances; the wild war-dance of the head-hunting Nagas to the graceful swirling dances of the North. Even the traditional dances of Ceylon find a place.

The Festival is a success: the audience is enthralled, the rich rajahs and maharajahs and industrialists shower money on the school: everyone is happy. There the film should have come to an end. But it goes on for some hundreds of feet in a dream and symbolic sequence which is Hollywood at its worst and the impression left of the film is unfortunately coloured by this really poor end sequence. However, box office in India is box office and who are we to criticise what another country enjoys?

Made at Gemini Studios, Madras, *Kalpana* is some 13,000 feet long. Special mention must be made of J. Ramnoth's fine camera work and of Vishnudas Shirali's sensitive and beautiful musical score. Without conceding too much to popular taste he has adapted classical Indian music to produce a score which is not only admirable for the mood and needs of the film, but which can be enjoyed by Indian and Westerner alike. Shirali has been Uday Shankar's musical director for ten years and is a first-class musician, showing in this film a real understanding of the special problems of writing music for film.

THE QUARTER IN BRITAIN

By

ARTHUR VESSELO

THERE ARE TIMES when even the most objectively-intentioned critic must abandon the manner of staid impersonality and venture squarely forth into the battle-ground of first-person-singular argument. For myself, I feel this necessity strongly over *Scott of the Antarctic* (directed by Charles Frend). Many of my critical colleagues, among them some of the most intelligent, have written this film off as "worthy but uninspired". I can only say that I find this watery judgment incomprehensible. And let me add—to ward off the suspicious—that I have no friends or relatives among the makers of the film, and that I had committed myself to no view before the mass of criticisms appeared. In fact, I saw the film later than most critics, was aware of the judgment that had been passed, and in the outcome profoundly disagreed with it.

It can be admitted readily that the film has a number of defects. I have yet to see a film that has not. There is, for example, the unconvincing and now notorious backcloth scene near the beginning. There are also certain woollinesses of explanation at various important points, in particular the failure to make it perfectly clear, at the final halt, why none

of the party was able to go on to fetch help: the reason why can be fairly guessed at, but that is not really enough. Yet, despite all the defects, the balance on the other side is so great that I would claim the "Scott" film to be one of the best of its kind ever made. It has a restrained but compelling authenticity of atmosphere which is rare and admirable.

I will confess to having little of the Polar explorer in me; and I will confess also to having never devoted much thought to Captain Scott before I saw the film. But, since seeing the film, I have thought a good deal about Captain Scott and his companions and their last journey together, and in quite fresh terms. I no longer tend to think of them as stereotyped boys'-book heroes (I must acknowledge the previous misconception): instead, their story now appears to me as a tragedy in the genuine sense, of great human endeavour overwhelmed by tremendous and unpredictable misfortune—overwhelmed physically, yet rising ultimately superior in its vast impact on the spirit of mankind.

That is how the film leaves me. The characters are finely animated and real, the colour in the main first-class. At a moment when British film-making is in the throes of crisis,

I think it just to signal here my own appreciation (for what little it may be worth) of a major British film.

After *Scott of the Antarctic*, even the best of the quarter's remaining films seem to me to be relatively small fry. For instance, the Powell-and-Pressburger version of Nigel Balchin's *The Small Back Room*, a tale of the scientist back-room boys in England during the war, can only, I think, be said to be good in patches. The impressionist sequence of the depressed scientist fighting the allure of a magnified whisky-bottle has already been roundly condemned in too many places to make it worth while hammering further; while, in general, the psychological background of the scientist's depression is far from self-explanatory. Nevertheless, there are some excellent items of characterization, and one or two outstanding passages, notably that of the neutralization of the bomb, at the end, and the hilarious but edged satirical sequence half-way through, describing the visit of a thick-witted dignitary (Robert Morley) to the scientists' workshop.

Another novel-into-film, Montagu Slater's *Once a Jolly Swagman*, directed by Jack Lee, has received acclaim for the documentary effectiveness of its scenes of motor-cycle speedway-racing. Certainly these scenes are quite effective—but they are hardly enough in themselves to make up for the rambling uncertainties of the film as a whole, with its wanderings across the years and its confusion of points and morals. If the novel is partly to blame, that does not finally excuse the film.

For some reason—perhaps it is just coincidence—two H. G. Wells novels have suddenly followed one another on to the screen during this quarter. *The Passionate Friends*, though one of Wells' less distinguished works, is the one that has been chosen by Messrs. Lean and Neame as a rough basis for the latest of their celebrated *tours-de-force*. It appears to be about a young woman who prefers "security" at £10,000 a year to "romance" at £1,500. For most of the film her psychological and amorous difficulties are neither interesting nor even particularly intelligible (the intelligibility is not increased by the use of a complicated system of flashbacks and flashbacks-within-flashbacks); but there is just one point, where she refuses to run away with her lover, when acting and direction do combine momentarily to shed a gleam of meaning on the situation. Otherwise it must be said with regret of this film that it is one of those where the part is considerably greater than the whole. The makers have achieved in places a technique of atmosphere not second to Hitchcock's at its best; but the argument to which these embellishments are added is so turgid and purposeless that the result is like sounding brass.

One day somebody will discover that H. G. Wells is not so easy to translate to the screen as he looks, if only because he is often so much more concerned with ideas than with precise verisimilitude of action or conversation. *The History of Mr. Polly* is obviously a good deal nearer the mark than *The Passionate Friends*, and John Mills (as producer) and Anthony Péliéssier (as director) have been able to follow its course much more faithfully; but there are difficulties none the less. Mr. Polly's lower-class environment, made over-concrete on the screen, slips into grossness and caricature; and his self-revealing monologues become after a while a trifle tedious. The film is an agreeable enough diversion, and John Mills' Mr. Polly is a tribute to his versatility after Captain Scott; though it is a pity that his accent could not have been kept uniform throughout.

There is nothing lower-class about the environment of *Elizabeth of Ladymead*, which breathes the usual Wilcox-Neagle air of engaging aristocracy, this time in Technicolor. The story, divided into four episodes, each taking place after a war, is something about the emancipation of women in the last hundred years. It is an opportunity for Anna Neagle to charm her public yet again, in four diverse rôles and with four diverse male supports in the absence of her "steady", Michael Wilding. There is no doubt which of her four performances comes most to life: it is the sketch, closely imitated from nature (or at least from its photographic record), of the revolting young woman of 1920. This much of the film is something to be remembered.

Certain films occur from time to time which one would just as soon not remember at all, but which for particular reasons demand to be recorded. That unhappy fiasco, *Eureka Stockade*, is one of these. It demands to be recorded because it is the long-awaited successor to Harry Watt's earlier film of excellent promise, *The Overlanders*; but it is a director's failure of the first order. Despite Chips Rafferty, despite period costumes, shaggy beards and scenery, the authentic Australia of gold-rush days a century ago never comes across. It is lost in a welter of sheer amateurishness.

A Warning to Wantons also has a particular reason for being recorded, since it is the first big effort of the much-publicised "independent frame" technique. The technique is outwardly quite unobtrusive, and to that extent it is successful. But it is success of a highly negative kind. The film as a film, with its pseudo-Continental atmosphere and "naughty" manner, is long, dull and stupid, and makes it fully clear that independent frame is irrelevant to aesthetic quality—except for the far from negligible danger that its use may give directors claustrophobia and completely stifle their creative ability.

As for *The Blue Lagoon* (in appropriate colours), it has to be mentioned as an example of the strange bypaths that may be travelled by intelligent and efficient craftsmen in search of popular appeal. Messrs. Gilliat and Launder have better to give us than this, and if it is the film crisis which has thus prompted the dispersal of their talents into alien climates, then there is an added need for urgency in bringing the crisis to an end.

As a makeweight, a word in mild defence of a condemned and castigated trifle, Ralph Thomas's *Once Upon a Dream*. This is a piece of farcical nonsense on the theme of near-infidelity (of a wife with her husband's manservant), in the style of Tom Walls rather than *La Vie Parisienne*; and it would hardly require even a word, had it not been treated with such strait-laced severity by a certain school of critical thought. The truth is that within its own category of frivolous idiocy it is amusingly manoeuvred, and its *doubles entendres* are really quite innocuous.

A film of merit which was just squeezed out of the last quarter's tally was *The Small Voice*, directed by Fergus McDonell, about a playwright and his wife, on the verge of separation, who are reunited through the ordeal of being shut up in a lonely house with bandits. Though by its nature a minor film, this has more power and promise than many self-advertised "films of the year". Whatever its imperfections here and there of development and style and character-delineation—and it is certainly not without them—it shows, in its best passages, a grip of essentials and an understanding of human nature (as in the morbid altercation between husband and wife at the beginning) which raise it well and truly out of the rut.

WELCOME STRANGER!

Eighteen years old this issue, SIGHT AND SOUND has seen many film magazines come and go. We are all the more delighted to publish this tribute from John Grierson and Phillip Mackie since "Sequence" looks like lasting.

FOR SOME TIME PAST, the commonest conversational gambit in certain film circles has been, "Ever come across a magazine called 'Sequence'?" It's safest to say it first, before somebody else does.

In case no one's said it to you, or in case you still talk about "Sequence" without having read it, I now recommend this magazine to everyone who cares about films and who each three months or so can spare the price of a plain gin or ten cigarettes. In a possibly narrower field, I recommend it to everyone who used to care about films but now finds them a bit of a bore or just another job.

For "Sequence" is new and fresh and lively. Set it against the commonplace enthusiasms and routine facetiousness of most current film criticism, and it looks like the Boy Wonder making rings round a punch-drunk old pug.

The pugs were young once too, and fought on the barricades in their time. Cultural films are better than whodunits. English films are (or should be) better than American films. Films with a sociological content are better than drawing-room comedies. Documentaries are better than you think they are. The fighting has been hard, and the fighters sink back, pretty tired, but with strength enough left to turn out a column a week.

And now, fresh and unscarred, into the ring step these brash young men from Oxford—Peter Ericsson, Gavin Lambert, Lindsay Anderson—to state anew what the fight is all about. Their function is painful but necessary. Critical principles ossify in the hands of the pundits, the experienced backward-lookers; for the good of its soul, creative art needs to be looked at with an eye ever-new and ever-young.

They are confident, the young men. In their first number they gave the war cry:

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good". The rest, whether British or Russian or French, whether aesthetically or sociologically or politically well-intentioned or not, whether feted by the Sunday papers or awarded the "Daily Mail" trophy for the greatest artistic achievement of all time, may confidently be consigned to the rubbish-heap, to limbo, to the outer darkness".

They are concerned to clear the obstacles in the way of understanding and true appreciation. They drive affable daggers into the British Orthodox Film Boost-Group—even into its occasional adherent Mr. Stonier:

"He seems (not, perhaps, surprisingly) to have fallen victim to the fashionable cult of artistic patriotism. At its best this leads merely to over-praise of the second-rate; at

its worst it equates the critic with the economist and turns him into a sort of voluntary blurb-writer for the national product".

They flash a knife at the sociological boys who hold the joyless conviction that films must be "serious", and the comfortable ladies who "declare categorically that films are not an art". They will join hands or fight duels anywhere they please: they are delighted to agree with Josh Billings that *The Best Years of our Lives* is "heart-warming hokum" which "artful showman Sam Goldwyn" achieved by "brilliantly rehashing the old malarky".

Their own critiques are often disturbing enough to make a case-hardened filmgoer re-examine his opinions and ask whether preconceptions got in the way. Sometimes they need long paragraphs to lasso their meaning; but sometimes they strike out a single phrase or sentence that rings a bell in the mind. "Hamlet dwarfed by the vastness of his settings". Of *Odd Man Out*: "It sets out deliberately to be a masterpiece".

Of *Oliver Twist*: "The realism of Dickens formalised . . . in keeping with Lean's rejection, except in the early stages, of the social indignation expressed so powerfully in the novel". Of British films generally: "The material is there, but the sensibilities give only a partial response".

They are not concerned to damn or praise, but to perceive the object of each film, and to judge its success in achieving that object. Their candid eyes see the virtues that some others mistook in (for instance) *The Pirate*, *Dream Girl*, *The Small Voice*, *Summer Holiday*. They are accused of being pro-Hollywood, but in fact they are pro whatever they find to be good. (Don't think I simply agree with their judgments: to my mind they sadly underrated *Four Steps in the Clouds* and sadly overrated *Farrebique*.)

Do I represent their scope too narrowly? They can write for orchestra as well as for solo trumpet: see the articles on Clair, Carné, Sturges, the New Pessimism in the French Cinema, Dance in the Cinema. And they can be funny, too, with a neat little flick of the whip, almost like Miss Lejeune. (Of *Quartet*: "This is the first of a series to feature Grand Old Men of English Letters. The next is Noel Coward".)

The inside cover carries the brave and true boast that "Sequence" is sold in Paris, Brussels, Copenhagen, America, South Africa and Australasia. I hope the sales go well there; but it would pay British film-makers for their own benefit to subsidise the young men, till the day the young men turn into middle-aged pundits and another new generation comes up.

WHY NOT MINIATURE SCRIPTS?

By

RAYMOND NEWPORT

SCRIPT-WRITERS PERIODICALLY COMPLAIN that though their work is the basis of the whole film the Director always gets the credit. Mr. Guy Morgan, the late Honorary Secretary of the British Screenwriters' Association, recently sent a questionnaire to his members. One of the questions was: "What, in your opinion, are the practices of current film production that present the greatest obstacle to successful screenwriting, or most adversely affect the prestige of screen-writers"? Easily topping the list was the lack of reference or publicity by critics. This is probably best explained by looking at their other objections. The employment of too many writers on one script; the unlimited dictation by Director and Producer; subsequent alterations to their script; and the preference for adaptations from novels and plays. All reasonable complaints, but the critic is hardly to be blamed for not giving credit to a writer who may share the writing with others; is under the unlimited dictatorship of the director; may have his work altered without his permission; and who may be re-writing someone else's story, anyway. Mr. Morgan collaborated on the scenario of *Anna Karenina*. How can the critic distinguish his work from Tolstoi's or Duvivier's?

Even when the writer's script has been altered by the Director "on the floor" the final version or parts of it may be different from the intentions of either the writer or director. Helga Cranston, in "The Film Hamlet", says that some directors shoot a scene a dozen or more different ways and send them to the cutting room hoping for the best, and that "an Editor may present them with a construction which they had never thought of themselves". Exactly. But who would get the credit? Certainly not the poor Editor. This is hard luck, but it is in the nature of the work, for cutting can only be appreciated by someone who knows all the original material sent to the cutting room. The scenarist should not get the credit, for the result would be at least twice removed from his intention.

No, there is only one way to appreciate the scenarist's work and that is simply to see it as he wrote it.

It is true that the case of film scenarios is somewhat different from play scripts and musical scores, which are necessary for performances. A film is not in the same way performed anew at each showing, it is merely taken out of its can and run through a machine.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is greater than any performance of it, and it would still be a great play if it were never performed again. If every copy of it in the world were destroyed the actors and scholars who know it by heart could re-write it. Similarly with, say, the piano sonatas of Mozart or Beethoven. With the film it is far different. We have, alas, lost much of the work of Chaplin, Griffith and Von Stroheim, and no amount of memory can reproduce them. It follows that a film script has much less value for its own sake than the written play or music. Nevertheless, it is valuable as an aid to the study of the film art.

It is no coincidence that the film *Hamlet* was subjected to a far higher standard of criticism than usual, at least in

the case of those who may be presumed to know the play. It is also interesting that those who were the most impressed were those who, presumably, did not know the play, as one critic actually admitted he did not. To be able to read and form one's own mental idea of a story that has been filmed is to be able to judge not only the author's conception but also its interpretation by the director, designer and cameraman, and to a lesser extent the editor. The reader would see when the director deviated from the script and could recognise much more than at present how a director creates a moving picture from a few bare directions. Even more important, he could see if some of the "director's touches" were really in the original script. He could also see if the director's interpretation surpassed or fell short of his own imaginary one.

Equally important, the film student could refresh his memory, like the students of music and drama, without having the expense of putting on a special showing. A footnote in Mr. Ernest Lingren's excellent "The Art of the Film" is very pertinent and is worth pondering over:—

"Pudovkin was obviously writing from memory. Any one who has had an opportunity to see old films again, and to check them against his recollection of them, knows that the memory can play the most queer tricks with our visual impressions. If Pudovkin could not remember accurately the details of shots to which he must have devoted the most concentrated creative attention three years previously, what are we to expect of the recollections of a mere spectator? Yet most film history and much film criticism has been based entirely (and hitherto perforce) on recollected impressions".

A few scenarios have been published in this country, some of them as appendices to books on film writing, but they were suspiciously like the précis of the film. A shot by shot analysis of a film is useful only to refresh the memory. What is needed is the original script with footnotes or a special article explaining where the director deviated.

The relationship between the writer and director varies greatly. Sometimes, as in the case of Launder and Gilliatt, the writer may also be the producer or director. Other writers have no further say once they have completed their script. There may be many treatments between the author's original conception and the final shooting script. Under these circumstances it would be unwise to suggest which version should be published. The best judge in each case would be the writer himself.

Unfortunately the writer in most cases does not own his scenario and so is in a different position from the playwright and composer. If many alterations were made between the script and the finished film it is possible that the film company would not permit its publication. The first step is to show that these scenarios are needed if film criticism is to become more informed, and that there is a public for them. Isn't it worth trying?

FILM MUSIC ON RECORD

By

PETER CRAIG RAYMOND

BEFORE ONE UPHOLSTERS a penthouse on the twelfth floor it is necessary to build up from a foundation. The same condition exists in writing any article which intends to adequately convey an idea of a subject. Obviously in writing of recorded film music, we must, as our starting point, take the original film itself and study the musical score both in special "spots" and as background accompaniment.

Realise firstly that music is an essential ingredient in the concoction of a modern movie but, in addition, it is merely one part. One part of a huge combination of separate activities which culminate in the integral production that is a film. Arthur Bliss accurately remarked that the movie goer must not be conscious of film music as something distinct from the film itself. It is an indispensable part which must never intrude by being allowed to monopolise the seers attention. Whenever music, or any other part of the whole, takes time out for itself, the continuity of the story is broken.

Music is of assistance to the film in many ways, the most obvious being to accentuate certain parts, assist the development of tension and to serve as an additional guide to the mood of the scenes. Many melodies have actually outlived the film for which they were composed and in which they were introduced, in brackets. It may be pointed out that quite a number of movies are remembered for their musical content alone. Cartoon features especially are in mind when I say this. The new British cartoon series, for example, has a high standard of musical work, probably sponsored by the producer, David Hand, who was with Walt Disney until coming to England for the formation of G.B. Animation. David Hand was responsible for such Disney epics as *Snow White* and *Bambi*.

The film *As I Live* is most likely forgotten by the public but in *As I Live* there was a melody used as a continual theme which is now in the ten best selling sheet music numbers. "Dream of Olwen" is the title, and several versions have been recorded in this country. We might as well continue by quoting some other examples of film music of consequence. There is the still popular Richard Addinsell work "Warsaw Concerto" from *Dangerous Moonlight*, which is issued on Columbia DX 1062.

Richard Addinsell also wrote "Prelude and Waltz" for Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit* and this is obtainable on the same label—Columbia DX 1186. Brunswick have three records (03505, 6 and 7) from *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. These are by the Victor Young Orchestra.

Brodszky's music for the British success, *The Way to the Stars*, is available again on Columbia DB 2180. Auric's score for *Hue and Cry* has been recorded by the H.M.V. Philharmonia Orchestra (conducted by Ernest Iving).

Another British film *Coastal Command* contained work by Vaughan Williams, which has since been waxed. These are a few of the examples of film music contained in the English record catalogues and locally released.

If British Film Music has any one fault it can, to my mind, be only in the structure of its Orchestras. Over here we have no studio orchestras, the companies use different men for each film. Musicians are contracted for use in one film only and in this way many are hired who have had no previous experience of this type of work, while other men who do know the medium are not occupied.

In the United States, the large studios have their own contracted orchestras, conductors, writers, arrangers and the other necessary musicians permanently employed, solely in film work. The M.G.M. Company now have their own recording company for popular production. The M.G.M. Orchestra and most of the studio's name stars have recorded on this label. (M.G.M. has recently become available in this country with a distinctive yellow and black label).

Music is indubitably gaining a great deal of stimulus by the huge, increasing audience before which it is presented through the medium of the movie. More thought is being given to its use and everyone from director to the consumer public is aware of its unprecedented importance both from the continuity angle and as an added publicity incentive. I have quoted British and American examples, but the rest of the film-producing world is equally active. Mexico, Italy, France and Russia all have used music of worth in their movies. The Russian 1944 Michael Romm Production *Girl No. 217* features a score by Katchachurian. (On an off-beat, Khachachurian's "Sabre Dance" has recently been relegated to the swing music world and in this idiom has attained an immense popularity).

There is a natural affinity between the film and the music it contains. Mutual benefit is derived in that the film gains much through its use of music while music has a new outlet of large dimensions. To millions, the opportunity of visiting a concert auditorium is rarely possible, some would refuse the offer if it were given. But present your music film-wise and the enthusiast may hear it every evening without going out of his way of incurring much expense. Even more, thousands who would not go to hear a concert even if they possessed a free pass, and it was just around the corner, will see a film and enjoy the music as long as it is used in context and not super-imposed on the film—which is, after all, what they have gone to see.

Let the producer realise that he is using music to help form his films and not as an advertisement for itself and he may be assured, not only of good results, but of an ever-increasing box office for what is bound to be a better production.

HOLLYWOOD—A PSYCHOLOGICAL TREND

By

ROBERT PEER

IS THERE a public demand for psychological pictures? Apparently yes, for the latest trend in Hollywood productions has now lasted several years, and is still gathering strength as it speeds along. Neither the war itself, nor its end, could detract from the impetus. And that's a good thing.

I am not thinking so much of the pseudo-scientific poppycock which Hollywood—tongue in cheek—puts out, as if saying: Now folks, we know this isn't exactly psychoanalysis as Freud wrote it but we think you'll like our idea of it. Witness, to name only one example, the fantastic dream sequences in R.K.O.'s *Lady in the Dark*, starring Ginger Rogers. This picture probably started a dozen hapless psychoanalysts rotating in their graves in solemn protest, but it also made thousands of people laugh. It was good entertainment. It was fun.

GROWING UP

Today we include much more than such popular science interpretations under the term "psychological pictures". We have come to look upon it as the label for films which are no longer concerned with merely what people do, but try to show what makes them do it. Hollywood is going through a change which is just as important and far reaching as the abandonment of the early slapstick comedy with its pie-throwing contests. Hollywood's growing up.

In the good old days of the Hoss Opry, the pattern was relatively simple. The hero was white, and the villain was dyed a deep black. When the villain kicked the old prospector who had befriended him over the edge of a cliff (blaming the hero for his crime), to appropriate the latter's newly-found gold mine and to seduce his lovely daughter, he did only what the audience expected of such a scoundrel. And when the hero, against overwhelming odds, defeated the gang of criminals, killed the villain in a fight to the finish, married the gal and won the gold mine, this, too, was according to pattern.

No tedious explanations of the goings-on in anyone's mind were necessary. Six-shooters formed the only argument, and the villain was always punished in the end.

Now take as a contrast Universal's coming production of the Ronald Coleman picture, *Imagination*. Ronald Coleman portrays a murderer in this movie, an insane actor. But we are not simply told that this actor is a dangerous madman. We are shown how it came about that in the end he was unable to divorce life on the stage from his real life, until he killed, labouring under the delusion he was Othello.

What a contrast in characterization, when you compare this story treatment to former black and white, villain battles hero pieces!

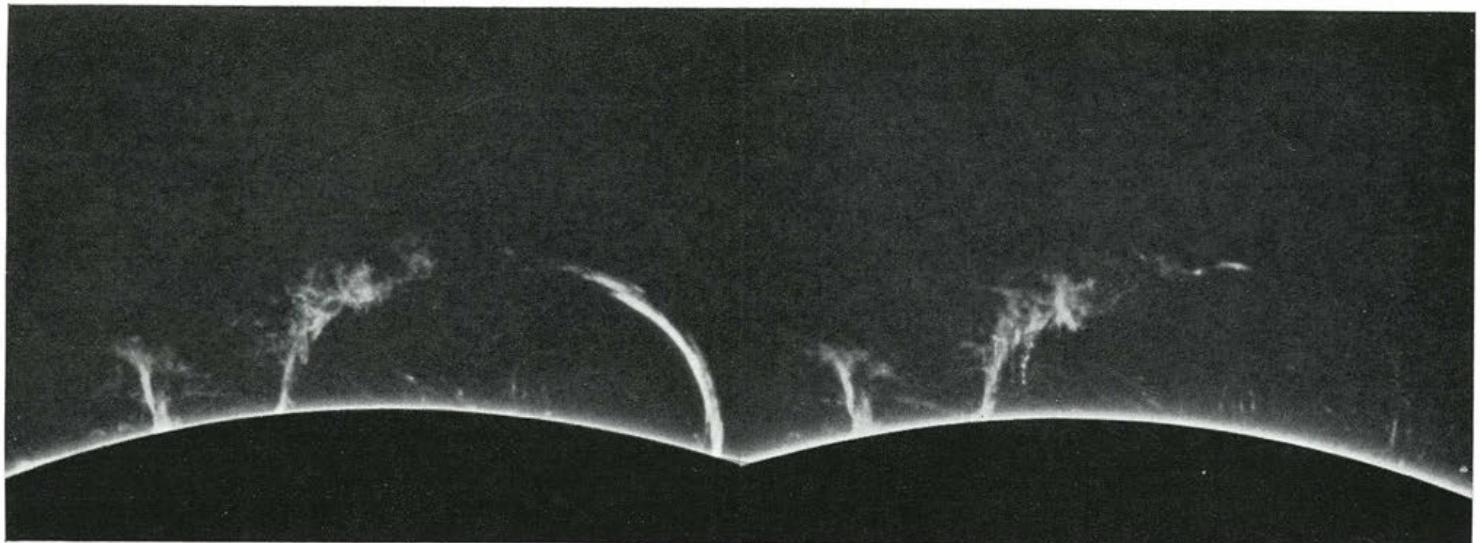
COME TO STAY

Audiences asking for a more adult approach to life as portrayed on the screen, are directly responsible for this trend. Returning soldiers added their voice to this demand. The war had taken the boys from Kansas, from Missouri, from South Carolina and from Alabama, and scattered them all over the globe, exposed them to life stripped to its rawest. Away for often the first time from their sheltered farms, they found themselves face to face with death, not just once, but day after day, for months on end. The ones lucky enough to come back had changed under the ordeal, had grown more mature. They had begun to ask "Why" more often than at any time since their childhood, and they meant to get an answer. Hollywood, with its very sensitive ear for box office trends, was fast to take cognizance of this demand. Productions like *Mildred Pierce*, *Possessed*, *The Unfaithful* and, recently, the *Snake Pit* played for weeks to sold out houses.

The psychological trend in pictures seems to have come to stay. Lately, it has been adapted to add suspense to the time-honored conceptions of whodunits. Fritz Lang, one of the pioneers of the psychological film, intensified drama to a high pitch in his Universal-International picture, *Secret Beyond the Door*. In this movie, Joan Bennett, as Celia Barrett, the unsuspecting bride of Mark Lamphere, portrayed by Michael Redgrave, comes to the latter's home from Mexico, where they met and married after a whirlwind romance, to learn that Mark is a widower with an adolescent son.

When she realizes that Mark, whom his own son accuses of having murdered his first wife, plans to kill her, she flees the house. But her great love for Mark forces her to return, and to probe his tortured mind until she can expose the roots of the sickness, and thus cure him.

Mixing movies with psychoanalysis is probably only a passing fad. The psychological picture, however, is not. This is a healthy sign of the growing up process in the movie industry. The more adult "WHY" is added to the former "WHAT", and while action is still being stressed, events do not just happen any more. Intelligent motivation of what's making people on the screen react in a certain manner, is one of Hollywood's most important steps forward in recent years.



Bernard Lyot—Solar Prominences

The height of arch on left is 250,000 miles

THE SCIENTIFIC CINEMA IN FRANCE

By

PIERRE MICHAUT

THE CINEMA IS NOT ONLY a great instrument of popular amusement, the tremendous spread of which is one of the features of our time, but it is also, in the hands of experts, a real instrument of scientific research. Originally, the cinema was for a long time merely a casual attraction, and it was thought that the fashion would soon pass. But, at the same time, many men of science immediately recognized that it was a marvellous instrument for analysis of a lasting quality. The "separative power" of the camera is applicable to time in the same way as the "separative power" of the microscope is applicable to space. By means of the slow-motion and high-speed contrivances which were known before the famous séance of Christmas, 1895, held in the Indian Salon of the Grand Café on the boulevards of Paris, the cinema had been modifying the cadence of time. It allows of the separation of elements which are intermingled or simultaneous; it catches aspects which are invisible or imperceptible to the eye.

In its application to science the cinema not only allows of a better power of vision, but also, by extending the powers of photography, it permits a penetration into worlds unknown and prohibited to our senses, thanks to films shot with ultra-violet or infra-red light, with X-rays, and in the future, perhaps, with cathode rays.

THE FORERUNNERS

In point of fact, twenty years before the opening of the famous Cinéma Lumière in Paris in 1895, the scientific cinema was already in possession of some of its original resources: *high-speed* and *slow-motion*. In 1874, the astronomer Janssen had made a slow-motion observation of the occultation of Venus, by taking an impression of the phenomenon every 70 seconds, i.e. 47 impressions. He made use of a circular photographic plate, turning in his "Astronomic Revolver". He could easily have reproduced these impressions on a strip of paper (and after 1892 on a roll-film) in order to make them projectable. The plate is preserved in the Musée des Arts et Métiers, in Paris. In 1882 Marey began to take recurrent pictures, either in slow motion or at high speed, for the study of rapid movements (such as of a horse-race, or of a goat or a man) or of slow movements (e.g. the growth of a plant), first of all on plates, then on strips of paper, and finally on rolls of film. His famous "Fusil" for the study of the flight of birds is only one of the numerous models of camera which he invented and constructed during the course of his career as a research worker.

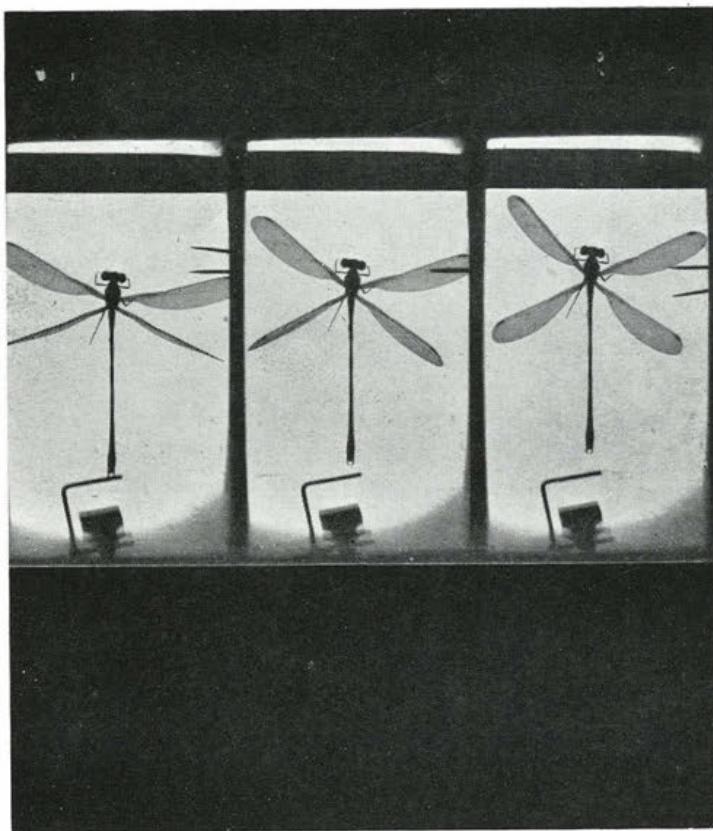
THE "TIME MICROSCOPE"

Acceleration and slow-motion bring within the range of our senses phenomena which are too fast or too slow for unaided perception: the blossoming of a flower, the growth of a microbe, the course of a projectile, the rupture of a test tube. Both these methods consist in modifying the rhythm of the projection in relation to that of the photographs taken. The number of impressions per second has not, in itself, any absolute value; what is important is that the rhythm of the taking of the photographs should accord with the movement of the phenomenon under observation. If 300 images per second are sufficient for the observation of the flight of a pigeon, the movement of whose wings is completed in $1/10$ of a sec., the fluttering of the wings of a fly, on the other hand, lasts for only $1/200$ of a sec., and in order to catch as few as 10 impressions it would be necessary to operate at a speed of 2,000 im.-sec.

NEW METHODS

Slow motion is practised in botany, embryology and astronomy. It is sufficient to ensure the regular functioning of automatic apparatus which regulates the taking of photographs at selected intervals. Dr. Comandon is the most eminent specialist of these techniques in France: his first experiments date back to 1908, in a small cinematographic laboratory which Charles Pathé had placed at his disposal at the Joinville Studios, when, as a young student, already dedicated to research work, he was working on a thesis on the trypanosome. There he made his first films on the germination, blossoming and growth of plants. At the same period, by means of a film, he brought phagocytosis to public notice, the theory of which had just been promulgated by Metchnikoff. To-day, along with his collaborator, M. de Fonbrune, he is continuing his film studies at the Pasteur Institute on the red corpuscles, the living cell, and caryokinesis; he has shown on the screen the duplications and movements of chromosomes and of genes in the phenomenon of the division of cells. He recently filmed the grafting of amoeba cells, creating "monstrosities", in which a monocellular organism finally develops with two cells.

His technique of micro-manipulation (by means of needles, hooks, pipettes, minute scalpels in blown glass) permits of performing (*under the microscope*) actual surgical operations: his films of the dissection of parasitised red corpuscles have been shown. The filtered lighting for the elimination of noxious blue



Précuresur: Insect's wings beating : Taken at 700-800 frames a second.

radiations and for the prevention of a rise in temperature, is regulated by a control which gives to the image a perfect clarity and also an aesthetic value, a graphic quality, of great fascination to the layman.

M. Bernard Lyot has devised new methods in astronomy for the observation of the sun. With his coronograph he isolates the solar disc even in the telescope, effecting a total eclipse of the sun at will. By polarising the monochromatic filter he can take photographs with certain rays of the spectrum and can film the chromosphere itself. His films on the solar prominences have been shown to all the learned societies of the world; his studies on the photosphere reveal especially the formation of granulations and other phenomena which disturb the incandescence of the sun. His film on Mars facilitated research on the chemical composition of the Martian atmosphere, the physical structure of the soil and the climate. Joseph Leclerc, the cinematographer of the research commission of the Paris Observatory, filmed the eclipses of the sun in 1936 (in the Caucasus), in 1945 (in Sweden), etc. In meteorology Joseph Devaux confirmed new ideas on the formation of clouds and the theory of convection whirlwinds by means of high-speed films.

The Observatory of Saint Michel, near Forcalquier (Haute Provence) is for France the solar observation post in the recently instituted international programme for the permanent observation of the sun. M. Bernard Lyot, mentioned above, is having a polarizing monochromatic filter constructed for Saint Michel, which will be equipped with a 35 mm. cinematographic camera; the various phenomena of the chromosphere will thus be filmed in the hydrogen spectral band. Greenwich, Coimbra, Mount Wilson, Kodaikanal in India, etc., are in the same system of permanent observation posts for the chromosphere: reports are centralised every day at the Meudon Observatory.

Slow-motion is applied to rapid movements; the Muybridge apparatus (1878) for the study of a horse-race was not a cinema; the 12 im.-sec. "Fusil" photographic apparatus of Marey was, however, already a rough model of a camera.

M. Bull, of the Marey Institute, and MM. Magnan and Huguenard, studied high-speed at the Sorbonne, with apparatus with revolving mirrors or by multiple-lens methods.

The Séguin brothers took photographs at 10^{-6} sec. by making use of instantaneous lighting processes applied to industrial stroboscopy: the principle was already known: a periodic pheno-

menon, lit by a trail of synchronised sparks, seemed to be immobilised in a fixed position. Slight variations around the point of synchronism allow this position to be varied, and give it the appearance of slow motion. In this way M. Clerget was able to proceed to the direct study of petroleum injections into a Diesel motor, and M. Tenot to that of the cavitation of marine propellers; the study of the deformation of the blades of aircraft propellers, and the curves of the fuselage and wings of aeroplanes has been carried out by this method in the Souffleries of Saint Cyr, and at Chalais-Meudon and Issy-les-Moulineaux.

General Libessart, in adapting his method of umbra and his "Éclateur" to these processes, attained a speed of 10^{-8} sec. His research deals with exterior ballistics; after the invasion of France he continued his work, first of all in Canada, and then in Great Britain. This method allows of the recording, not only of the projectile, but also of the waves of compression of the air which accompany its course, such as the shock-wave. It has been possible by the measurement of angles to establish with extreme precision the speed of the projectile in its trajectory, its speed of rotation on itself, and the slowing down caused by the penetration of an armour plate of known strength.

IN THE UNKNOWN AND FORBIDDEN UNIVERSE

The infra-red ray penetrates zones which are more or less opaque to normal (visual) radiations. In a medical diagnosis it is possible thus to observe subcutaneous portions of anatomy; it shows the network of blood-vessels at a certain depth, reveals tumours in course of formation and makes the study of thick-scaled organisms possible by micro-photography.

The infra-red ray can pierce dense fog, and makes cinema and long-distance photography possible. M. Charriou has carried out some remarkable work for the French Air Ministry, and has produced some magnificent pictures. Aerial photographs of factories by infra-red rays reveal the location of boilers and heated premises, and the infra-red detectors have already served for guiding bombers.

On the scientific side of civil administration infra-red rays are used in the photographing of letters in their envelopes, in the differentiation of inks, and in the study of forged writing, the examination of burn-marks and the reading of traces of writing on burnt paper. It has been possible to decipher the original writing on palimpsests; discoveries in assyriology are also said to have been made by this means.

The enumeration and study of the stars can be carried out by infra-red photographs by means of the electronic telescope; in this way it is possible to detect and differentiate the "red stars" which emit red or infra-red rays; MM. Lallemand and Lenouvel have specialised in this technique at the Paris Observatory.

The first good infra-red photographs were made in 1924-5 by M. Yvon Bertrand, the head of Prof. Gosset's laboratory; he perfected a remarkable method. Other specialists are devoting themselves to it at the present time. Special plates and films are supplied by Agfa (Factories in U.S.A.), Kodak, Ilford (Great Britain).

Photographs taken by ultra violet benefit by the short wavelengths of these rays, which are two or three times less than normal light in photography. The lenses should be transparent to ultra-violet: rock-crystal (quartz) is usually selected. Focussing is one of the main difficulties; the process is either by fluorescent screen or by trial and error, i.e. by taking a series of successive pictures and retaining the best of them.

The amount of light necessary, however, kills living organisms in a few fractions of a second; the films can record only a small number of pictures. On the other hand, certain substances, transparent to ordinary light, are opaque to ultra-violet: hence there are contrasts on the plates, revealing or differentiating unknown or scarcely visible "facts". Thus chromosomes, and the nuclei of cells, are opaque to ultra-violet. In this way the taking of instantaneous photographs gives details of the living cell. Ultra-violet and infra-red rays are used for the study of the cell, more especially in England.

Finally, ultra-violet can be used for the study of microbes, tinted by means of fluorescent dyes. The examination is made on a black background lit by ultra-violet. This is the fluorescent microscope. Constantin Levaditi uses this technique at the Pasteur Institute, and also his son, Jean, who is attached to the Virus Service with Dr. Lépine. The tubercle bacillus has been studied by this method.

The first X-Ray film was, without doubt, that which Dr. Comandon, together with Dr. Lomon, exhibited in 1911 to the Learned Societies of France. He used an objective of 1/155 and at a rate of 12 im.-sec., with a fluorescent screen. He was obliged to confine himself to 5 or 6 cinematographic pictures.

Resuming his work in 1922, and profiting by the progress that had been made (Coolidge ampoules of greater resistance, screens and films of greater sensitivity), they recorded a human heart (Dr. Comandon operating on himself) at a rate of 17 im.-sec. About the time when Dr. Janker of Bonn brought out the famous Ufa documentary "Roentgen Rays" (with his Zeiss 1/0.85 lens), records were taken in Paris by Dr. Djian, a hospital doctor, with a lens with an aperture of 1/0.55: which had never been attained before: the exposure could be extended to a minute without any operative risk. The Paramount Topical Gazette showed all over the world pictures taken at the Pitié Hospital. Dr. Abreu, a Brazilian doctor, photographed with a simple large-aperture Leica camera, the radiosopic screen on a small-sized film, during a course on anti-tubercle investigation in schools and factories.

Television, however, is going to upset all these techniques. As a matter of fact, by means of television it is possible to take photographs by very weak light, insufficient for photography: a candle is enough. In this way it is possible to get a first impression, the intensity of which can be amplified electrically, in the same way as the intensity of a sound can be amplified electrically. And, in theory, this impression can be made as brilliant as required. Projected on a fluorescent screen, this amplified impression can be filmed. M. Dauvilliers, the eminent collaborator of Prince Maurice de Broglie, was the first to evolve this idea when, in 1922, he saw the X-ray films of Dr. Comandon and Dr. Lomon: he then concentrated on the idea of "capturing the electrons which swept the radiosopic screen"; at that time television was still in its early infancy.

In cathodic rays the separative power of the electronic microscope has attained very considerable proportions. The "associated fictitious wave" (Louis de Broglie) is 100,000 times smaller than the mean wave-length of the visible spectrum; from the maximum of 3,000 diameters of the optical microscope it would be possible to attain one of 100,000 diameters. At the present time work is being carried out at 50,000 diameters. (A protonic microscope is in course of construction at the Collège de France, making use of corpuscles 2,000 times heavier than the electrons; direct enlargements of 600,000 times could be attained.)

The apparatus, however, must be placed in an absolute vacuum: i.e. one which excludes observation by living beings: and moreover, the "permeability" conditions of objects are very individual. Finally there are the viruses which, at the present time, have benefited most from the application of the electronic microscope. By this method Dr. Pierre Lépine, Head of the Virus Service at the Pasteur Institute (who is also in charge at the Institute of Microbiology at the University of Montreal, of the teaching and research work on the pathogenic viruses), has been able to

measure the dimensions of the viruses. He has not only measured them, but has photographed them. The electronic microscope has also made bacteriophages visible and has thus confirmed the theory of Dr. d'Hérelle which had aroused great opposition and keen controversy amongst scientists. Dr. d'Hérelle is now not only completely vindicated, but his discovery is recognized and he, himself, is suggested as a candidate for the Nobel Prize . . .

The Pasteur Institute has three electronic microscopes at its disposal; another centre where it is in use is the Aeronautical Office for study and research at the Bellevue Research Institute; in addition there are the Petroleum Institute, the École Française de Papeterie, the National Blood-Transfusion Centre; this organisation has just exhibited at the recent World Congress held in the United States, a series of sensational photographs, illustrating a treatise on the "Ultra structure of the protoplasm of thrombocytes in the electronic microscope" by MM. Bessis and Bricka, and M. J. Tahuis. Toulouse, finally, is an important centre for research. M. Dupouy, senior member of the Faculté des Sciences, constructor of one of the first models of the apparatus, is continuing his work on the improvement of the system and of his methods of application.

The photographic plate ought, like the object and the object-slide, to be placed in a vacuum; the next step is focussing on a fluorescent screen. This is then removed and replaced by a plate or film; posing lasts for a fraction of a second or many seconds. Special S.A.S.* permit of the withdrawal of the plate.

It does not appear that up till now anyone has attempted to take cinematographic pictures under the electronic microscope; as a matter of fact, no occasion has offered itself during the course of research.

The cinema could be applied to phenomena such as the evolutions of crystals. The amplified copy of the picture devised by M. Dauvilliers, might perhaps be considered . . .

The R.C.A. in the U.S.A., Metropolitan-Vickers in Great Britain, Philips in Holland, l'Institut Polytechnique in Zurich have constructed some fine apparatus; in France the Compagnie Générale de T.S.F. is manufacturing at a cost of 6 million francs a range of remarkable electronic microscopes, the prototype of which has been constructed by Professor Grivet, who is at the present time Professor of Electronic Optics at the Sorbonne, a Chair specially created for him. At the Laboratory of the Cie Générale de T.S.F. they have recently been carrying on research on the evolution of the hardening and modification of structure of the alloys of copper and aluminium (used in aircraft construction) by taking photographs over a period of a year.

The protonic microscope gives scope for yet other things; the "preparation" should be smaller than one millimicron, approaching mono-cellular thicknesses. We shall have to confine ourselves to examination by a low light. Will the atom ever be seen? and will there be anything to see when the atom is attained?

* S.A.S. valve—a small orifice for the introduction into or withdrawal from a compartment, so as not to destroy the vacuum in the apparatus.



Champignons Prédateurs made by Dr. Comandon and M. de Fonbrune of the Pasteur Institute. The two illustrations show the fungus *Dactylaria brocoppaga* catching certain microsporitic Nematode on which it breeds.

THE FRENCH CINEMA 1948-49

By

GEORGES SADOUL

1948 WAS NOT such a brilliant year for the French Cinema as 1947, which produced *Le Silence est d'Or*, *Quai des Orfèvres*, *Antoine et Antoinette*, *Le Diable au Corps*, *Farrebique*, all of which were works of first-rate importance. That, however, is not to suggest that the production of 1948 did not include many very worth-while shows.

Les Parents Terribles by Jean Cocteau was, for instance, a brilliant success which almost put *L'Aigle à deux Têtes*, by the same author, out of court. This adaptation of a stage-play was carried out with an intelligence which solved the same problems as Laurence Olivier did in *Hamlet*, though in a lesser degree.

La Vie en Rose, by Jean Faurez, was a treatment of the life of a poor "usher" in a boys' school, who fancied himself a Don Juan; the young author was successful in getting good effects from a situation more or less in the vein of Pirandello.

Aux Yeux du Souvenir, by Jean Delannoy, was a great box-office success, both on account of its clever technique, and the popularity of its stars, Michèle Morgan and Jean Marais.

The "Prix Louis Delluc" which was founded by the *Critique Indépendante*, was awarded to the comedian Noël-Noël in *Les Casse-Pieds* (or *La Parade du Temps Perdu*), who had already very adequately shown that he could portray various types of "the average Frenchman" in *Le Père Tranquille* and in his *Adhemai* series. The film is an ingenious entertainment on a theme which is analogous to *Les Fâcheux* of Molière, but with no pretension to the same depth.

Roger Leenhardt, one of the best French critics and the author of a fine documentary, *La Naissance de Cinéma*, made his début in the production of *Les Dernières Vacances*, a kind of intimate journal of a French bourgeois family, in which he showed great talent and sensitivity, in spite of a few roughnesses in the narrative.

Finally, Yves Allégret, brother of the well-known author Marc Allégret, brought off a couple of great successes with *Dédée d'Anvers*, and again with *Une si Jolie Petite Plage*, this latter being beautifully interpreted by Gérard Philipe, the star of *Le Diable au Corps*, who is the best contemporary French actor. But Yves Allégret might be taken to task for repeating, without much variation, the pre-war French successes in the manner of *Pépé le Moko*, or of *Le Quai des Brumes*, with their over-literary heroes who have come down in the world, their haunting mists, their atmospheric effects, their conventional and facile pessimism.

Dédée d'Anvers attracted but little notice at the Venice Festival; the genuine excellence of the production escaped attention, the subject being rightly regarded as out of date. Amongst the other successes of 1948 may be mentioned the Franco-Italian film, *La Chartreuse de Parme*, in which Gérard Philipe impersonated Stendhal's Fabrice del Dongo, under the direction of Christian-Jaque, who also directed a film on the founder of the Red Cross, *D'Homme à Hommes*.

NEW AGREEMENTS

The year 1949 began under better auspices than the previous one. In certain respects the position of the French Cinema has improved. The Government, under pressure of public opinion, has just instituted an Assistance Fund of two milliard francs for the French cinema, and has also rescinded the agreements signed at Washington in 1946 by Byrnes and Léon Blum. These agreements had imposed on the French Cinema a diminishing quota, whose early withdrawal was to be foreseen. The new agreements have in fact established a quota with opportunities for increase, an arrangement which has subsisted for some time in England. The proportion of French films which is obligatory in programmes has risen from 31 per cent. (Blum-Byrnes Agreements) to about 40 per cent. (1948 agreements).

This improvement in the quota and the prospect of the Assistance Fund have stimulated production since summer, 1948. Closed studios have been re-opened, and there has been a great increase in the number of individual undertakings. Production in 1948 amounted to 98 films as against 83 in 1947, and this figure is the highest since 1938. Before the war French production was about 120 films per annum. If it is borne in mind that all over the world the number of films tends to decrease—if not their average length—it will be seen that as far as numbers go, French production is not far from attaining its pre-war level.

But this increase in quantity is accompanied by a certain decrease in average quality. Economic difficulties necessitate the preferential selection of films with low production costs, by authors of the second rank, and played by actors who are not well known. And there is a further disquieting phenomenon. Up to 1940 it was usual for a French film to be shown only a few days after completion. Nowadays there is a long delay before an available screen can be found. Of the 98 French films produced in 1948, in March, 1949, 68 were still waiting to be shown to the public. The majority of these films were finished four or even six months ago, and some date even from 1947.

THE NEW GRÉMILLON

And these films are far from all being of second rank. Amongst them are included productions which are eagerly awaited by the public, either for their subject, the generality of appeal or the popularity of their stars. They include, for instance, *Le Docteur Laennec* by Maurice Cloche, generally regarded as a second *Monsieur Vincent*, which was by the same author; *Tabusse* and *Le Crime des Justes*, two novels by André Chamson, adapted by André Gehret on lines very similar to those of the Italian school, or the English documentary school; a very spectacular *Duguesclin* with Fernand Gravey; *Les Paysans Noirs*, made entirely in Central Africa, etc., etc.

Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that by the time these lines appear the two great films of the season, *Pattes Blanches* by Jean Grémillon, and *Le Point du Jour* by Louis Daquin will, like *Manon* by H. G. Clouzot, at last have found a place on the screen.

The first night of *Manon* was a great event in Paris, so largely attended that the police had to intervene to disperse the disappointed crowds who could not enter the hall. A chef-d'œuvre was expected, but some of the critics were not entirely satisfied. *Manon* is less perfect than *Quai des Orfèvres*, so far H. G. Clouzot's best work. The qualities of this author are in many ways comparable to those of Alfred Hitchcock. He is an admirable story-teller, and understands how to interest the public; his style is highly skilled and he has a remarkable plastic sense. But such a tremendous social subject—which is what *Manon* should be—seemed a little beyond the capacity of an author who is really more at home with a traditional crime plot.

Pattes Blanches, by Jean Grémillon, is an adaptation of a story specially written up for the screen by the dramatic author, Jean Anouilh which he had contemplated directing himself. Jean Grémillon is the author of two of the most remarkable films produced during the occupation: *Lumière d'Été* and *Le Ciel est à Vous*, which are too little known abroad. This author wanted to stage *Le Printemps de la Liberté*, a commemorative film on epic lines, for the centenary of the Revolution in 1948: unfortunately this plan could not be realised.

Pattes Blanches, a slightly conventional scenario, is a wonderful success, realism and poetry being admirably intermingled. Both the interpretation and the photography are of the highest order. In addition to the already well-known actors, Fernand Ledoux and Suzy Delair, Arlette Thomas, a young débutante, showed a talent very much in the manner of Lilian Gish in the days of long ago.

Le Point du Jour is the work of Louis Daquin, author of *A Nous les Gosses* and of *Frères Bouquinquant*, a first-class man, who has not as yet fully developed his vigorous and genuine talent. The film was shot in the mining district of Northern France, and is composed almost entirely of open-air scenes or the setting of a mine reconstructed on the spot. The work-people are particularly fine; never, even in *Kamaradschaft*, or *The Stars Look Down*, has the cinema succeeded in taking the audience into a mine in this way, and almost literally letting it mingle with workers busy at their job. There is scarcely any dramatic action in the film, but its tenderness and vigour make it consistently arresting.

The absence of French films in the cinema is not due, as might be supposed, to any lack of patriotic loyalty on the part of the public. An interesting commercial inquiry has recently been carried out by the Directors of the Rex, one of the biggest Paris cinemas. 347 persons for questioning were chosen at random, outside the usual clientèle of this theatre. Individuals of varying age, sex and income were selected, so as to form a microcosm typical of the entire country in social make-up. According to the answers received, 88 per cent. Parisians go to the cinema, 45 per cent. of them at least once a week. In the majority of cases (58 per cent.) they do not wait for an important film to come to their district, but go to see it at the more exclusive cinemas. The majority of film-goers (71 per cent.) prefer films spoken in French with a "dubbed" translation, but a relatively large proportion of the public (29 per cent.) prefer films spoken in their original language with French sub-titles.

Questioned as to their favourite films, cinema-goers named 8 French films and 6 American; no other foreign films were mentioned. But 61 per cent. Parisians showed preference for French films, 30 per cent. offered no opinion, and 8·7 per cent. stated that they preferred foreign films.

The proportion of preference for foreign films was especially noticeable amongst persons "of very high purchasing power." But if this very small social stratum (estimated by the investigators at merely 5 per cent. of the population) only appreciates French films to the extent of 37 per cent., on the other hand the average stratum, or the poorer classes, show a marked preference for the

French film. It amounts to about 70·6 per cent. of cases in the category of small incomes.

These preferences of the public are, of course, well known to the producers. But if they wish to present a successful French film, they are for the most part obliged by the "block booking" system to put four or five American films on the programme, and sometimes even more. This practice, however, has not as yet, in 1948, attained in France the level of England in 1920, when American films blocked the programmes for a period of 6, 12, or 18 consecutive months; people then complained that no British films were shown until the clothes of the stars were old-fashioned. It should be remembered that without the establishment of the quota there was a danger of the English cinema disappearing altogether.

The position of the French cinema at the present time is certainly not so gloomy as that. It may be assumed that the American invasion reached its maximum at the beginning of 1949. In a few months the beneficial effect of the new agreements and of the new quota will make itself felt. Production which, at the moment is being fettered by the retention of French films in reserve, will doubtless make fresh strides, at least if the incipient economic crisis does not come to a head. Disquieting statistics have already been published.

Attendance at cinemas had already fallen in 1948 by between 17 per cent. (high-class Paris cinemas) and 33 per cent. (cinemas in working-class and provincial districts). In most cases attendance at cinemas was lower in 1948 than it was in 1944, a particularly difficult year, when fighting, bombing and the great shortage of electricity had forced cinemas to reduce the number of their shows very considerably. It is to be feared that in 1949 the great increase in unemployment and the slump in prices—which is never accompanied by a fall in the cost of living, nor a lowering of the price of seats in the cinemas—will involve a fresh fall in the numbers of the audiences. The cinema, like the theatre, literature, or music, is for a large part of the population a luxury which it cuts down at a time of crisis. Nevertheless, we are convinced that, in spite of these very real and growing difficulties, French films will continue to maintain that enviable position in the world that they have held since 1935.

THE NEW BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

The Negro in Films, by Peter Noble. (Skelton Robinson, 1948, 15s.)

Mr. Noble's book is a sustained polemic against race prejudice on the screen. It might appropriately have carried the subtitle "The American Negro in Feature Films", for that is what it is substantially about. True it does allude fairly briefly to the approach to the colour problem in French and Soviet films. (Something might have been said about the negro in recent Italian films, a most interesting phenomenon.) On the subject of British feature films on negro themes, the author is not very critical; is it, for example, tact or lack of information which accounts for his reticence about the reception of *Men of Two Worlds* by African audiences in Kenya and elsewhere?

There can be no doubt, however, that Mr. Noble's heart is in the right place, and "The Negro in Films" is an important piece of journalism. It provides a vast deal of information about the false and biased conception of the negro as a human being, perpetuated in too many films from the silent period to the present time. (There is a lively section on *The Birth of a Nation* controversy, familiar to readers of SIGHT AND SOUND.) With so much excellent

material, presented so enthusiastically and with such evident idealism, it is distressing to have to record that the argument is occasionally muddle-headed—one learns on different pages that the negro musician does and does not appear in mixed bands and that the negro is and is not featured in stills publicity for films. The evidence, too, is against the impression, conveyed by Noble, that such progressive American films as *Fury* and *Black Legion* have not been generally shown in the Southern States. A full and first hand account of those films, made specially in the U.S.A. by negro casts for negro audiences, to which the author refers, would have been valuable.

Perhaps deliberately, the book has little or nothing to say about the documentary and educational film. Yet work in Africa in this field is one of the most significant happenings in films to-day. Out of it may grow a genuine African school of film making. In any future edition, it is to be hoped that Mr. Noble will include a full account of the work of the Colonial Film Unit and of the U.S. Southern Educational Film Service and the University of Georgia. This will add greatly to the meaning and balance of what is, despite any short-

comings, a piece of pioneer reportage. Finally may I suggest that one or two stills from documentary and educational films (shots of real people like the dentist in *North Carolina Health Services*) would enliven the parade of theatrical stereos, with which the book is largely illustrated.

JOHN MADDISON

British Cinemas and their Audiences ; Sociological Studies, by J. P. Mayer. (Dobson, 1948, 15s.)

After the somewhat shaky opening of Sociology of Film, we can now enjoy the second reel of Mr. Mayer's sociological epic, which he modestly entitles British Cinemas and their Audiences. The book consists of an Introduction and Retrospect which, one cannot help feeling, are slightly pompous, and a large number of personal documents with little or no interpretation. There is also reprinted as an appendix the valuable inquiry into cinema-going habits by the Wartime Social Survey, and some comments by Seneca.

This book is neither one thing nor the other. In a popular exposition the presentation of the documents in full is unnecessary and, if it is intended as a scientific study,

the data should be analysed in detail and the results compressed into an article of some 50 pages. Even then the study would be seriously limited by the method of selection which has been used.

The documents were selected by a competition in the "Picturegoer", which has a circulation of some 320,000. Out of 400 documents selected in this way, Mr. Mayer offers us an "instalment" of 60. It is true that the essays of all the cranks and pseudo-sophisticated Filmgoers who cared to enter for such a competition are analysed in conjunction with the Wartime Social Survey Inquiry to give some indication of how representative they are of various age and occupational groups. However, the number of writers who mention their aspirations to fame in the literary or film world gives an indication of the kind of selection which has been operative. Mr. Mayer dismisses the fact that only those few literary aspirants who were prepared to express their experiences in verbal form comprise the greater part of his sample, with airy nonsense about "a qualitative study" and vague references to "many hundreds of minute case studies". Perhaps we could have an instalment of these sometime.

Even after these apologia Mr. Mayer still seems a little troubled and the doubting are referred to Professor G. W. Allport's monograph, "The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science". In obedience to the warning, this reviewer has consulted this study. While entirely in agreement with Professor Allport's emphasis on the value of qualitative and individual results for the formulation of hypotheses and the planning of research, it seems unlikely that a method of selection such as that employed by Mr. Mayer can provide a reliable guide even in an admittedly difficult field of research.

True, it is that at this stage qualitative rather than quantitative research is important, but surely Mr. Mayer should realise that in a study which purports to be scientific (and otherwise is not the constant use of the word "sociological" inadmissible?), sampling is just as important in a qualitative research as in more quantitative work.

CHRISTOPHER BEEDELL

10 Anni di Cinema Francese: Vol. I, by Osvaldo Campassi. (Milan, Poligono, 1948.)

The ten years in the life of the French cinema which this volume covers run from 1930, the early days of the sound film, to the outbreak of the war in 1939. Only the work of the four outstanding directors of the period—René Clair, Duvivier, Carné, and Renoir—is dealt with here, and a second volume is planned to include the other films of the period.

The author has concentrated on the æsthetic significance of these ten years, during which the individual quality of the French film was established. He treats the work of each director chronologically and shows at what points they influenced each other. A detailed summary of the plot of each film is given and a "filmografia" section gives the full technical particulars about each production. There is also an

extensive and fully annotated bibliographical section of 230 titles, listing the international film literature (mainly articles in film periodicals) on the period under review. Finally there are many illustrations chiefly consisting of stills from the various films described.

It will thus be seen that Signor Campassi has covered his subject very thoroughly. Indeed, one can fairly say that his book will be of the greatest interest and assistance to serious film-goers. The reader is enabled to see each film, not merely as an isolated phenomenon, but as part of the logical sequence of development both in the work of its director and in the evolution of the French film itself during this most important formative period. A French reader, already thoroughly familiar with the works reviewed, might perhaps sometimes feel that certain nuances have been missed in Signor Campassi's interpretation of plot and presentation. But on the whole the accounts of the films are vivid and accurate, and, most important of all, they rouse the reader's interest and make him want to see the films themselves.

MURIEL GRINDROD

Science in Films. I. A World Review and Reference Book, edited by Blodwen Lloyd. (Sampson Low, Marston, 1948. 15s.)

Whereas the use of scientific films as an aid to elementary and secondary school teaching had been established for some time, their importance for advanced teaching and as a tool for research itself had not been officially recognised in this country until fairly recently. If the newly founded University Film Councils want to achieve their aims of creating film libraries comparable in standard and efficiency to present day University book libraries, and of producing scientific films for their needs more systematically, in their own film units, than has been possible hitherto, they will have to rely on international co-operation to an ever-increasing degree. The necessary basis for such co-operation, in the form of a really comprehensive reference book, has so far not been available in Great Britain. We must congratulate Dr. Lloyd on having provided this badly needed tool at last: in approximately 100 pages she has managed to collect relevant information from over thirty different countries, not only with regard to makers and distributors of scientific films, but also about official organisations, such as UNESCO, and "learned and professional bodies", (among which are listed the Scientific Film Societies), which are concerned in some way or other with the promotion of scientific films. She also gives lists of books and periodicals which deal with scientific films. Titles of some of the more important scientific films themselves are mentioned under various headings.

The rest of the book, in addition to showing samples of stills from some of these films, contains a collection of articles dealing with various aspects of the scientific film. Professor Bell's essay on "Visual Physiology and the Cine-Film" gives useful hints on the best conditions of projecting and viewing motion pictures. Three chapters on "Techniques", written by experts, provide valuable suggestions on

such varied subjects as script-writing choice of equipment for shooting films, general technique and even on such specialised techniques as Underwater, Colour and High Speed Cinematography, as well as Cineradiography. These chapters, though by no means integrated into a complete "Guide", will, nevertheless, be of great value to anybody who has either started or who contemplates producing scientific films, be it for teaching, research or any other purpose.

DORA ILSE

Le Cinéma Scientifique, by P. Thevenard and G. Tassel. (Paris, La Jeune Parque, 1948, 17s. 6d.)

It is interesting to compare this book about the French scientific film with Dr. B. Lloyd's recent "Science in Films". Both have tried to give a comprehensive picture of the activities of the makers of scientific films in their respective countries but both have fallen short of the ideal. Dr. Thevenard and M. Tassel have, however, succeeded in giving an intimate and critical survey of the many activities which are now going on across the Channel. They have come closer to the ideal of an overall report of all the many uses to which the film is now put in science but have rather neglected its applications in applied research which are beginning to be of such wide importance; one would also like to see many more detailed references to the original work of the French Scientists mentioned.

These remarks should not deter anyone interested in Science or Films from investing 17s. 6d. and carefully studying the book. M. Jean Painlevé, the doyen of the French Scientific Film, has written an introduction in which he underlines the extreme financial difficulties which face the French scientist who wants to use films, be it in pure research or in education.

The book is divided into five logical sections:

The analysis of high-speed phenomena.

The synthesis of slow movements.

The film for education and for popularisation of Science.

Some special uses of Scientific Films.

General Conclusions.

Each of these is treated very fully both from the historical and present day aspects.

In the first Muybridge and Marey precede Debie and Bourdereau and are followed by a detailed analysis of the optical and electrical illumination-factors which make modern high-speed cinematography possible on 35 mm. film. In the next section on time-lapse photography, emphasis is laid on its use in Biology and Astronomy, in both of which French scientists have been pre-eminent. Dr. Comandon's work is described in detail, including a long list of his most recent films, and M. Métais and M. Moricard are not forgotten. The section on Astronomy is rightly devoted almost wholly to Bernard Lyot and his outstanding discoveries in photography and cinematography of which some of his best are reproduced in this book.

The use of films for the teaching of science and for its popularisation has

perhaps been more fully explored in France than in this country, although inadequate finance has hindered its fulfilment even more than here. The life's work of such men as Jean Painlevé, Marc Cantragel, Jean Bréault, Maxime Prudhommeau and M. Lallier will always be remembered and it is intimately described in this book. A very good chapter on the theoretical and practical aspects of animation concludes the third section. The special uses of the scientific film include sub-marine filming, medical and X-ray work: the first of these is treated at considerable length, as Le Prieur, its inventor, and M. Cousteau have been working on the development and perfection of this "spécialité française". The general conclusions ask among other things for film-units to be attached to University Departments and for the maintenance of a central Scientific Film Research Station to be financed by the state—none would quarrel with that in this country.

The book contains 214 pages and its French should not present any difficulties; 105 photographs illustrate it, some of great beauty, all of great interest to the scientific film maker and user. It is hoped that some enterprising British publisher will soon have an English version available.

A. R. MICHAELIS

Film and Education, edited by Godfrey M. Elliott. (New York, Philosophical Library, 1948.) \$7.50.

In their many-sided viewing of educational films, the authors, above all things, stress the extent of modern education that has entered every department of the community and within the school itself has gone far beyond old limitations. Their mass of material is grouped in five sections on the nature of the educational film, educational films in the classroom, outside the classroom, in other countries, and administrative problems and practices. Although the reader will find more wind than matter throughout, a useful survey has been made on the whole. The need for films to stimulate as well as instruct is underlined, and writers put strong accurate fingers on present weaknesses.

Bringing "life", that is social life, into the classroom is a major aim of education. Where it is not possible to give direct experience, films are a valuable substitute. This is especially true for vocational guidance and social studies. In the latter case American teachers are interested in the use of specially cut newsreels and similar material. But there is another side to learning about life: teachers have shown selections from theatrical films to impart social grace and an understanding of morals and ethics. There appears to be a certain innocence about this, but the possibilities are fascinating. If our children were to learn the art of living from, let us imagine, Humphrey Bogart, we might soon have a truly enchanted world.

STANLEY OREANU

Better Color Movies, by Fred Bond. (San Francisco, Cameracraft, 1948.)

Both the amateur and professional 16 mm. enthusiast should find Mr. Bond's book extremely helpful and useful. He is a

recognized authority on colour photography from the practical point of view and, for this reason, there is never any danger that his books will be too academic. In the book under review he has covered the ground very thoroughly, even to the extent of giving some excellent advice on the basis of lighting under artificial light. He starts by explaining the nature of colour and the characteristics and limitations of colour films. This leads naturally on to exposure calculations and composition of various subjects, the latter being well illustrated with attractive colour plates. The author is a great believer in using exposure and colour temperature meters to cut out the human factor, which in the field of exposure and colour values, is often found to be at fault. The fact that colour film is not so plentiful here as in the United States should not prevent the enthusiast from being prepared when the supply position improves. As the subtitle suggests, the book purports to give "quick, simple answers to common problems of amateur movie makers". Readers, we are sure, will agree that he has amply done so.

C. R. GIBBS

Cinéma de France, by Roger Régent. (Paris, Bellefaye, 1948.)

Although a great deal has already been written about the activities of the French film industry during the German occupation of 1940-44, *Cinéma de France* deserves to be read and studied by all who wish to see the achievements of this period placed in their proper perspective.

Roger Regent, who will be well known to readers of the excellent Parisian independent, *L'Écran Français*, gives an almost day-to-day description of the events that occurred, and the achievements and failures that were made between August 13th, 1940, and May 23rd, 1944.

He comments objectively upon each of the 220 films which were begun during this period and follows the careers of directors, actors, authors, designers and cameramen as they worked under conditions which were foreign to them in more than one sense of the word.

The book is probably best described as a critical history written in the form of memoirs. It is a valuable and interesting account of this important and unusual period, and for those of us in England who have, as yet, had an opportunity of seeing only about a score of "occupation" films, it provides an authentic background against which their merits should be set.

The text consists of five main chapters—*L'Année des ruines*, 1940, *Les sujets "héroïques"*, 1942, *Naissance d'un style*, 1943, and *Retour aux sources*, 1944. If these chapter headings suggest that the author's approach is primarily analytical, it can be said at once that he confines himself to indicating the main trends in theme and characterization, and has not sought a hidden significance in every reel of film he saw during this period.

An alphabetical list of all films commenced during the occupation, showing the director and the date on which shooting began, is given as an appendix.

The sixteen illustrations do not do justice to the films they represent. Apart from this, they fill the whole octavo page, either upright or lengthwise, instead of conforming to the frame rectangle within which the original shots were composed.

COLIN BORLAND

Les Catholiques Parlent du Cinema:
4me Congrès International, juin, 1947.
Office Catholique International du
Cinema. (Paris, Editions Universitaires,
1948.)

This book gives an account of the Fourth International Congress of O.C.I.C., held in Brussels in June, 1947. Representatives of nineteen nations made a survey of the cinema, dealing with its wide range of problems from a Catholic point of view, basing their enquiries on the Papal Encyclical: *Vigilanti Cura*, given by Pius XI, in 1936.

In the discussion on censorship it was pointed out that the existing negative form, which is largely based on moral disapproval, should and could gradually be replaced by constructive criticism, dealing with the technical, artistic and human value of the film.

A link was established with education in two ways, namely, education *through* the film (documentary, educational films in schools and in the mission field), and education *for* the film. This consists in training the visual and critical faculties within the traditional educational systems, where it is still so sadly lacking. An early start in visual training will eventually produce the critically discerning public.

With regard to the commercial aspect of the film, it was decided that Catholic activity should be directed towards co-operation with commercial enterprise rather than create small, and hence inefficient, organisations of its own.

Contributions on the aesthetics of this seventh art brought two interesting suggestions. The Thomistic definition, *id quod visum placet*, seems to apply *par essence* to this mainly visual art, although the plastic, poetical and musical aspects were not neglected. An unexpected parallel was drawn between the film and the *chanson de geste*: in both interest lies in the story and "the hero", whilst the public ignores the author and is unconcerned with the form.

The guiding thought of the articles in this very readable book is the application of the Christian conception of life to the cinema by a well-informed Catholic Action.

ELFRIEDA DUBOIS

The Squirrel Cage, by Edwin Gilbert. (Heinemann, 1949, 9s. 6d.)

Tony Willard, after years of poverty as a struggling playwright, becomes a highly paid screen-writer in Hollywood. This account of his efforts to preserve, and to secure recognition of, the integrity of his work in a fabulous world of fantasy is told with the painstaking thoroughness of one who speaks from personal experience. With an almost objective bitterness, the author tells of Tony's search for reality in

an unreal world, of his gradual realisation that, in such a barren waste of hypocrisy, deceit and false values, any kind of sincerity is impossible, of his inability to accept a substitute for that sincerity and of his ultimate departure from a wilderness of wealth and immorality. Against this background, drawn with satirical skill and meticulous attention to detail, the characters speak and act for themselves in a way which is almost cruelly consistent: their reactions, mental attitudes and general behaviour, even to the extent of having their dogs psychoanalysed, are always what one expects of them. This is a book of strength and humour and is written with a refreshingly unsentimental intelligence.

DAPHNE TURRELL

The Film: Its Economic, Social and Artistic Problems, by Georg Schmidt, Werner Schmalenbach and Peter Bächlin (Falcon Press, 1948, 25s.)

In 1943 an exhibition, "The Film Yesterday and To-day", was shown in Basle and later at other centres in Switzerland, Holland and Belgium. Subsequently, the material of the exhibition was incorporated in a book published in German in 1947. This is the English edition, translated by Hugo Weber and Roger Manvell. The book falls into several sections, dealing with the nature of the film, finance, artistic production (the largest section, covering scenario, direction, acting, camerawork, editing and trick effects), distribution and exhibition, and the audience. The exhibition style of lay-out has been preserved, with photographs and captions liberally spaced out on quarto pages, and the whole effect is extremely attractive.

Indeed, in this attractiveness there may even be a danger. It is so easy to turn the pages idly and superficially to scan the illustrations that one may easily miss the substantial content of the captions, which are in a kind of verbal shorthand from which the full meaning has often to be teased. The result amply justifies the trouble. One is continually lost in admiration at what the creators of this book have managed to say about the art of moving pictures in terms of static pictures. If a critic must justify himself, it is possible to complain that some of the pictures are too small, that sometimes one could wish a word differently translated (should not "recesses" on page 17 be "intervals"?), that it is a pity that prices and film-lengths are not given in pounds and feet rather than francs and metres.

But these are insignificant trifles compared with the positive qualities of the book: the skill with which techniques are illustrated, the fundamental soundness of its aesthetic premises, the soundness, too, of its political implications and analysis of film economics. At first sight, it appears merely a luxury publication; but on close examination it is discovered to be something which one would swear is as near to a perfect pictorial guide to film appreciation as is likely to be found.

ERNEST LINDGREN

The Use of Film, by Basil Wright. (Bodley Head, 1948, 3s. 6d.)

In this little book, another in the New Development Series, the author first summarises the means at the disposal of the film-maker, that is, "the creative, expressive machinery of the film medium itself", and draws attention to the gradual improvement in standards both in the taste of cinema audiences and in film production during the last twenty years. He goes on to give some account of the problems connected with documentary and instructional films, of their audiences and of the great potentialities of film in the fields of propaganda and advertising, for the dissemination of technical and scientific knowledge, in the classroom, in adult education and elsewhere. Finally he deals with the subject of world cinema, which, with the many uses of the film, may "help peoples all over the world to understand each other and each other's problems, and so bring them closer together in the ways of peace". In this connection he discusses the work of UNESCO. Although the book may not contain a great deal that is new, it is a succinct survey of the nature and scope of the film and its position to-day. There is a select bibliography at the end.

Amateur Movies and How to Make Them, by Alex Strasser. Revised edition. (Studio Publications, 1949, 15s.)

The author has now brought out a revised edition of a work first published in 1937. In this 1949 edition account has been taken of those war and post-war developments, which are likely to be of interest to the amateur, and several sections have been enlarged. The whole field of amateur film-making "is reviewed, examples are given, suggestions made and the essential technical and aesthetic questions are illustrated by drawings, photographs and actual film stills". It is a book which can be easily understood by the beginner and, at the same time, will be useful to the advanced amateur. It is divided into five sections: the technical side, the cinematic side, subjects for the amateur film) including the occupational film), special techniques (sound and colour), and what remains to be done when the shooting is over (editing, punctuating, titling and screening). The book is excellently produced and beautifully illustrated in colour, half-tone and line.

International Film Review: A Quarterly Publication of the International Catholic Cinema Office. (Brussels, yearly subscription £1, single copies 5s., London "Focus" Summer Place Mews, S.W.7.)

We should like to extend a welcome to this periodical, the first number of which has just appeared and which is to be published in three languages: English, French and Spanish. In their foreword the editors write: "We wish to see the International Film Review become the instrument of all who are working for a better cinema; the forum in which may eventually be fashioned a true Christian philosophy of the motion picture, the broad outlines of which were drawn up by Pope Pius XI in the memorable Encyclical 'Vigilanti Cura'". This issue includes surveys of the film in various countries and spheres and

reviews of films and books on the film, and there is an impressive array of contributors. The magazine is extremely well produced and fully illustrated.

Film Monthly Review Annual, 1948. (Precinct Publications, 1948, 5s.)

We have received a copy of this annual. It contains a collection of articles and pictures, most of which have appeared in the "Film Monthly Review" and including those relating to the films, *Hamlet*, *Oliver Twist*, *The Red Shoes* and *The Winslow Boy*.

Filmkunst: Zeitschrift für Filmkultur und Filmwissenschaft. (Vienna, Amandus, yearly subscription \$40, single copies \$12.)

This quarterly periodical makes its first appearance with the Spring Number. Published in Vienna and in German, its scope is international and its editorial board includes a London representative. If the standard of this first issue is maintained, this should be a publication of much significance, combining as it does thoroughness with a progressive intention. Among the contributors to this number are Cocteau, Pabst, Pudovkin and Wollenberg, and articles include those which deal with the film in various spheres. Accounts are given of the work of Wessely and Carné and there is an analysis of *Odd Man Out*. Other items include a full account of the British Film Institute, a chronological record of events in the film world during October and November last and a section of book reviews. There are some excellent reproductions of stills by way of illustration.

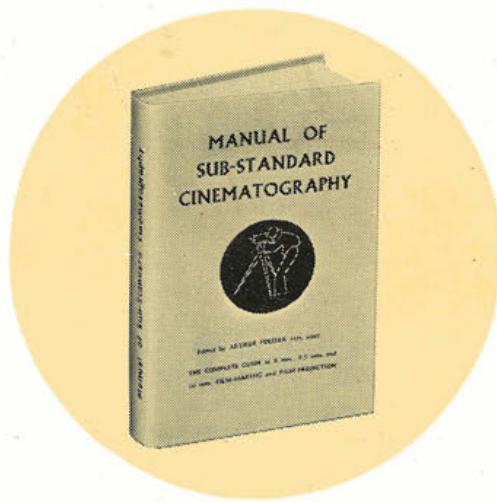
Films About Metals, compiled by the Scientific Film Association and the Joint Committee on Metallurgical Education of the Iron and Steel Institute, Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, Institute of British Foundrymen, Institute of Metals and the Institution of Metallurgists. (Current Affairs, 1949, 3s. 6d.)

We have received a copy of this extremely useful list of films about metals available in Great Britain. The entries are arranged in five sections: Historical and General, Metallurgical Theory and Research, Metallurgical Practice and Processes, Allied Techniques, and Manufacturing Processes and Products. Of these all but Metallurgical Theory and Research are subdivided. The distributors are given of all films and appraisals and gradings of a large number. An alphabetical list of film titles and the full names and addresses of distributors are to be found at the end of the book.

Index de la Cinématographie Française, 1948-49. (Paris, Cinématographie Française, 1948.)

A notice of the first issue of this excellent reference book appears in *SIGHT AND SOUND*, and we have now received a copy of the second. It again contains synopses of all feature films, this time released or shown in France between 1st October, 1947, and 30th September, 1948, lists of French and foreign directors and chief cameramen, films in distribution in France during the season 1948, synopses of French shorts and much other useful information.

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